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THE  
**Abominations**  
OF THE  
**CHURCH of ROME:**

Discovered in  
**A RECANTATION-SERMON,**  
**Lately Preached in the FRENCH**  
**Church of the Savoy.**

*Whereunto are added many Curious Particulars, of the  
Practices of the PAPISTS beyond the Seas.*

BY  
**FRANC. DE LA MOTTE,**  
Late Preacher of the Order of the *CARMELITES*,  
newly Converted to the Church of *England*.

**ENGLISH'D.**

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**LONDON:**  
Printed by *W. G.* and are to be sold by *Messrs Pitt,*  
at the Sign of the *Angel* over-against the  
little North door of *St. Pauls*. 1675.

*Where you may likewise have the same in French, as it was Preach'd.*

Abominations

OF THE

CHURCH

Truly Church of the

ENGLISH

AND

English and

the



TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE,  
**S<sup>r</sup> JOSEPH WILLIAMSON,**

One of His MAJESTIES most Honorable  
 Privy Council, and Principal Secretary of State.

RIGHT HONORABLE,

**I**F I were not fully perswaded of Your kind  
 acceptance of these Sheets, I should not be  
 so bold to offer them to Your Honour; But  
 the sensible expressions of Your great goodness and  
 favour which I have already received, and the  
 Approbation with which You were pleased to  
 honor this Discourse when it came out of the  
 Pulpit, at the time of my Recantation, will  
 not suffer me to doubt, but that You will accept  
 of it also now that it comes out of the Press.

I hope it will not be unserviceable in this  
 Nation, to settle in the profession of the Truth  
 the wavering minds of many too much inclinable  
 to Popery. <sup>from this</sup> This Consideration, with the im-  
<sup>inevitable</sup> portunities of my Auditors, have prevailed upon  
 me to publish these Lines which I desire may  
 be look'd upon as a testimony of the sincere pro-

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

cession of my Faith, and of that Loyalty and Obedience, which I do hereby vow to the Gracious Monarch of these Noble Kingdoms, where I am come to seek for a shelter. I might with reason expect to find it amongst Protestants; but the insolency and insulting humour of the Party that I forsake, and the affronts that I have already met with, even in the Streets, since my profession, force me to flie to the Protection of Your Honour; whose extraordinary Abilities and Fidelity have given You so near an access to His most Excellent Majesty, and cause You to act so worthily in that noble Station, unto which Your own deservings and Your Prince's favour have promoted You.

Your Generosity and Goodness will, I hope, pardon my present boldness, as proceeding from a thankfull acknowledgement of Your former favours, and from an earnest desire to be esteem'd, as really I am,

Right Honorable,

Your Honour's most humble,  
most obedient, and most  
obliged Servant,

FRANCIS de la MOTTE.



## To the READER.

### CHRISTIAN READER,

**I** Might very well have excus'd my self in not yielding to the earnest requests of several Eminent Persons, who have again and again desired this publication, if I had regarded either the common unhappiness of writers, especially such as offer to meddle with Religion, or the censures and hatred of my former Friends, which this will infallibly draw upon me. But I intend not to be much concerned at the Sayings of those, who are engaged by their Vows to spurn at every thing that disagrees with their Superstition, who are wont to condemn a Book at the sight of the Title, and to execute it in the fire before they have perus'd it. I have considered, that their displeasure alone should not hinder me from giving this to the Press, because I am certain that others more impartial and less prejudicated, will vouchsafe unto it their favourable construction, seeing that it may prove to be useful to such as are blinded with error, by discovering to them the Truth. Besides, in regard some have been pleas'd to surmise that I did not dare to publish many of those things which I mentioned a month ago in the French Church of the Savoy, at the time of my Abjuration, saying, that they were false Inventions, because I named neither the places nor the persons guilty of those disorders, of which I did then accuse the Church of Rome, and that I had made its Authors and Doctors speak that which they never intended, &c. I have thought my self oblig'd

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in vindication of my Credit to reveal and declare their Calumnies in a larger Discourse, so that they themselves may now perceive, that they were not a little engaged to me for my sparing them so much, for I might with justice have said a great deal more. They might have considered, that I was then in a place where it is not usual to speak all that is known, and that the respect which I have yet for many of the Romish Clergy, of whose hands I have received many personal favours, did hinder me from the discovery of all their nakedness.

But seeing they are so earnest with me to desire me to shew them the passages which I alledged out of St. Bernard, Baronius, Bellarmine, and others, and to name the places where the grievous abuses concerning the worship of Images and the Relicks of the Saints have been seen, I cannot deny their request; for it may be God intends to make use of this their simplicity, to make them understand how much they have been deceived. This is the chief cause that hath prevailed upon me to publish this little Tract: I may call it little, it is so indeed, for it is not to my purpose to examin and thoroughly sift out all the Controversies of Religion: I must needs acknowledge, that I am not so well versed in and acquainted with such matters, which I never understood but from the Romish Schools, as many other Persons that have and do write of them. My design is only to declare by the motives of my Change of Religion, that the Church of Rome alone is sufficient to convince any man, and cause him to perceive its Abuses and Errours.

The Protestant Party ought not to be offended, nor wonder at the bearing any scandal cast upon this Treatise or its Author; I intreat them to shew me so much favour; for they must understand, that the Papists are bound in conscience,

conscience, for fear of the guilt of a mortal crime, to speak all of me. If they did but give the least countenance to a Book that appears with such a Title as this is, or did but mention with respect and honour a person that hath done what I have, they would commit a grievous offence against the Laws of their Religion, of which they cannot be absolved, but by those who have obtained the privilege of giving Absolution in cases reserved to his Holiness. Besides, they believe as they are taught every day by their Preachers, that it is lawful to make use of any means to attain unto a good end; that is to say, that it is lawful to invent a thousand lyes and calumnies to spoil the credit of a book or of a person contrary to their Religion. I must not expect a more favourable treatment at their hands, seeing that they have been so bold for that end to attempt upon the lives of Men, nay of Sovereign Princes, as we may find in the Records of this City, and of other places. But I have no reason to be afraid of this kind of persecution, I mean of their Tongues, for I may say I have lived amongst them without blame, as may be conjectured from the considerable Employments which I have had in the Church of Rome, for their Bishops never admit a person into their Cathedrals to preach, unless they know him to be of an honest and good behaviour: And the Religions of that Order, of which I have made profession, (the Carmelites) which doubtless is one of the most exemplary of the Romish Church; if these had not had a good opinion of me they would never have promoted me to that degree of honour amongst them which I have held, having been three times the Priors Deputy in the same Convent, which Office is given to none but to such as are very regular and exemplary in their lives. It is therefore needless that any person

should trouble himself with an inquiry for the place from whence I came, and of my carriage while I have remained in the Church of Rome, to discredit this little Book. I am not afraid in the least of any such thing, I am rather fully persuaded that there is no man in those Towns where I have made my abode, nor in the Convents where I have dwelt, but will give me the reputation of an honest and just man, blameless in my carriage until now, as much as is possible, in case the change of my Religion be concealed from them. I think therefore that thou hadst best peruse this Treatise with a calm and unprejudiced mind, that thou mayst be better able to judge of the things therein declared, and gather from thence the instructions needful to undeceive thy judgment, if thou art yet in the same errors as I have been. Those that will read over these lines with that good disposition, will approve of my change, and of this publication, and will be constrained to confess, that there are causes and reasons strong enough to oblige any man to forsake the Romish Church, and embrace the Profession of the Protestant Religion.





### *The Prayer before Sermon.*

“ **O** Lord God, infinite in goodness and mer-  
 “ cy, who hast by the gracious hand of  
 “ thy divine Providence taken and lead  
 “ me as *Abram* out of the superstitious *Ur*  
 “ of the *Caldeans*, as *Lot* out of the filthy flames of  
 “ *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, as *Israel* out of the bondage  
 “ and tyranny of *Egypt*, as *Joseph* from his dungeon,  
 “ as *Daniel* out of the Lions den, and as the blind  
 “ Man of the *Gospel* out of that fearful blindness which  
 “ hath since my infancy hindered me from the disco-  
 “ very and acknowledgment of thy Sacred Truth?  
 “ O God, who hast preserved me from all perils, and  
 “ conducted me safe out of the hands of enemies with  
 “ thy powerful and stretched out Arm, here I am  
 “ prostrate at the foot-stool of thy Divine Majesty,  
 “ convinced in judgment, with a contrite and an  
 “ humble spirit, here I am in the midst of thy Elect,  
 “ of thy Royal Priesthood, of thy Holy Nation, of  
 “ thy People purchased with thy Blood, in the midst  
 “ of Believers, not with an intention to offer up  
 “ unto thee their prayers, for I am not worthy of so  
 “ holy



"holy a Ministry, my Tongue is not yet able to speak  
 "so loud as their sighs, and my Lips are too much  
 "defiled; but I am here to beseech Thee, O Searcher  
 "of the Heart! to hearken to their vows, and the  
 "prayers of their Souls, for the advance of thy  
 "Glory, the accomplishment and preservation of thy  
 "Church, especially for this which worships Thee in  
 "spirit and in truth, in these three Kingdoms of Eng-  
 "land, Scotland, and Ireland, for the prosperity of the  
 "King that Commands here, for his Spouse Queen  
 "Catherine, for James Duke of York, and for all the Royal  
 "Family; for the Arch-bishops, Bishops, and other  
 "Teachers of thy Church, that it may please Thee  
 "to enlighten them with the Spirit of thy Truth,  
 "and enflame them with an holy zeal for the Salva-  
 "tion of Souls; for the Lords and others of the  
 "Kings Council, for the Magistrates and other In-  
 "habitants of these three Kingdoms, that it may  
 "please Thee to supply and succour them in all their  
 "wants, whether they be spiritual or corporal: But  
 "more especially we pray Thee for all such as are  
 "yet engaged and plunged in error, take them out  
 "of the same depths of sin from whence Thou hast  
 "drawn me; open their eyes whether they will or  
 "no, that they may perceive the truth of thy Gospel;  
 "open their hearts by the divine power of thy Holy  
 "Spirit, that thy Blessed Word may be received as  
 "in a good and fruitful field, that it may bring forth  
 "an hundred fold! In this occasion be pleased to ac-  
 "cept of my prayers with thy peoples, for I know  
 "by experience that Thou alone art able to turn and  
 "convince a Soul brought up in error, and change

"a heart nourished from its infancy with an abhor-  
 "rency of thy Holy Word ! Therefore I pray Thee,  
 "or rather we all pray Thee together, to open the  
 "eyes of so many blind persons, whom I leave behind  
 "me in the regions of darkness, and touch with the  
 "efficacious finger of thy Holy Spirit, so many stony  
 "hearts that resist the motions and offers of thy  
 "Grace with so much obstinacy ! Lord, Thou hast  
 "performed in me a blessed change, for which I offer  
 "up unto Thee my hearty thanks and praises, be-  
 "seeching Thee to pardon my unworthiness, and  
 "graciously to accept of the thanks which thy faith-  
 "ful people here assembled do render unto Thee for  
 "my sake ! But O merciful God, at this same time  
 "that I find my self obliged to offer unto Thee my  
 "thanks for a favour received from thy hand, I find  
 "my self in a necessity to beg another favour and  
 "mercy of granting unto me the power and ability  
 "to declare unto this numerous Congregation the  
 "great mercy that Thou hast shewed me by bringing  
 "me to my Conversion ! I am desired, O my God !  
 "it is but just that I should give glory to thy Holy  
 "Name ; Justice and Reason require that I should  
 "declare thy Goodness where iniquity hath so long  
 "appeared with impudency, that I should employ  
 "the members which have been abused in warring  
 "against Thee to discover thy wonderful mercy in  
 "me ; these lips, this tongue, and this voice, which  
 "hath uttered so many lyes and errors against the  
 "light and suggestions of thy Holy Spirit ; these  
 "members that have declared so many falsehoods,  
 "preached up so many abuses, confirmed so many  
 "blasphe-

"blasphemies, committed and caused so many sins to  
 "be committed; it is just that they should glorifie  
 "thy Holy Name! Forgive, O my God! forgive me  
 "the sin of having so long detained thy truth in un-  
 "righteousness against my conscience and thy secret  
 "motions! Grant me the grace that I may this day  
 "be able to make an honourable amends, that I may  
 "give the same testimony to thy Blessed Truth which  
 "I have given to Heresie; and that I may bring forth  
 "fruits suitable to my repentance! For this purpose, O  
 "good God, purifie my unclean lips, touch them with  
 "a coal from thine Altar, cleanse this tongue yet ve-  
 "nomous which hath so often conveyed a poison into  
 "many hearts, inflame it with some of those cloven  
 "tongues of fire which lighted upon thy Holy Apo-  
 "stles, and which caused them to be no more dumb  
 "but eloquent! Change the accent of this voice,  
 "which hath been heard in the Pulpits of the *Romish*  
 "Religion! make it never to be heard any more in  
 "vindication of error, and that it may never accent  
 "and pronounce any thing but that which is altoge-  
 "ther conformable to thy Word! These are the peti-  
 "tions that I now present unto Thee, O good God, espe-  
 "cially at this time, beseeching Thee also so to prepare  
 "the ears and hearts of my Hearers, that they may be  
 "the better by my discourse, more confirmed and fer-  
 "rled in their Faith, and more resolved in an obedience  
 "to Thee! These mercies we beseech Thee to grant us.  
 "O merciful God, by the merits and only mediation of  
 "Jesus Christ, in whose Blessed Name we continue  
 "to pray unto Thee, as He Himself hath taught us;  
 "Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

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— *Where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound.*

**H**ERE I am, *my Brethren*, in this Pulpit to acquaint you at preſent with the cauſes of that which you have ſeen me do this morning: I am here to expreſs unto you a repentance ſuitable to the hainouſneſs of my ſins, by a publick abjuration of thoſe grievous errors which I have formerly profeſſed in the Church of *Rome*, that I might ſhew forth the accompliſhment of this holy Oracle pronounced by *St. Paul*, *where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound.* You may be fully perſwaded, *my Brethren*, that Gods grace hath obliged and conſtrained me to what I have done, for my Change of Religion proceeds not from the unconfancy of my mind; I have done nothing ſuddenly, I have been ſeven years in a continual deliberation, ſtruggling with my ſelf, convinced in my judgment, but could never reſolve until now. You muſt not therefore look upon my alteration as the effect of ſome calamity, or the conſequence of an unworthy behaviour, or a diſgrace: I never wanted bread, I have always had too much at command, and have

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ever met with more happiness in my undertakings than I could expect. Neither is this Change the product of any miscarriage; no, blessed be God, I am not ashamed of any thing that I have done, those Honourable Persons unto whom I have been recommended in this place may bear witness from the information of such as are worthy of credit. The greatest crime that I have committed is that which I have been guilty of this day, by forsaking a superstitious Religion and embracing a purer, by leaving the broad road to Hell and turning into that of Heaven. God out of his infinite goodness and mercy hath obliged me to it, notwithstanding all the natural persuasions of worldly interest; for I have left the assurance of a sufficient provision for my maintenance, to embarque my self and rely wholly upon Gods good providence. I have caused my best friends to become my most deadly enemies, I have made of my parents and relations my persecutors and sworn adversaries, I have left forever a Country where I enjoyed as much worldly happiness as was possible, to come to live and dye in another, where I have no other expectation nor means to advance my self but only from your kindness and favour. God knows how strong these reasons have been to detain me so long, and what difficulty I have had to command my self to a final resolution, but at last grace hath overcome; God hath had in me more power than the world and humane reason, and the hopes of my salvation more than the advantages of this life. That I might declare this unto you, I have now the liberty to appear in this Pulpit, I shall therefore  
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do it as briefly as I am able, I shall give you an account of some of those disputes which I have maintained in my mind, before I could resolve to do what I have at last done: I shall therefore begin to declare the reasons that have kept me so long in the profession of the *Romish Religion*, and that as far as I am able to judge do detain the rest of its Professors: I shall afterwards discover to you the reasons that have destroyed the first groundless reasons, and that have caused me to forsake the *Romish Religion* and embrace the *Protestant*, to renounce *error* for *faith*, *heresie* and *idolatry* for the *truth*, the *babylonish Rome* for the celestial *Jerusalem*, my *Country* for *Heaven*, and all for my *God*. By this Discourse you shall perceive the greatness of Gods mercy towards me, in that he hath been pleased of a stone to raise up a son to *Abraham*, and hath caused his grace to abound where sin abounded before.

THE FIRST PART.

THE first and chief cause which hath so long detained me in the Church of *Rome* is, that venerable Antiquity which is ascribed to her alone: I did sometimes consider her gray hairs, her pretended Founder the Apostle *St. Peter*, who as it is said governed her during the space of five and twenty years: I did sometimes look upon her Sovereign Authority, which she saith Christ himself gave unto her in the person of that Apostle, which since hath continued successively in all the Popes who have commanded in that See: This Succession of the Popes and Bishops



of *Rome* hath never been violated nor interrupted, as they pretend, but they have immediately succeeded to one another; the like is not to be seen in any other Church. Besides, I did sometimes view a long Catalogue of Martyrs and other Saints, who are said to have lived in an obedience to the Church of *Rome*, and to be dead in the profession of that Faith which is there now, and hath been always taught, as is pretended. I did examin all these plausible Titles, these glorious Attributes, and her divine Prerogatives, as I found them recorded in the Books and Schools of that Church, which could not but oblige me to an high esteem of her excellency, and to wonder how men could be so blind and irrational as to deny her to be the only true Catholick and Apostolick Church. In this manner, my Brethren, I have continued about the space of six or seven years, seriously considering these advantages that were given to this Church: At last I took that liberty which is not granted to any of that profession, and that is, to open my eyes and examin more narrowly from whence proceeded these magnificent and glorious Attributes, and what reasons *Rome* hath to claim them to her self alone: For that purpose I perused the Holy Scriptures, and its most ancient Interpreters, as the most worthy of credit, and by them I was constrained to alter my judgment, and to entertain perswasions contrary to that received from my Forefathers, from my Masters, and from the Reading of the *Romish* Divines.

I have found that Antiquity, in which *Rome* boasts so much, discovers her shame and disgrace, as the  
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Antiquity of a Noble Family is a reproach to a degenerated Son. I have found that the Authority which she claims hath no other foundation nor beginning, but the pride and tyranny of such Popes as have succeeded *Gregory* the Great, for neither he nor any of his Predecessors have ever thought it lawful for them to challenge or pretend to an universal Dominion or Authority in the Church. I have found this Succession, which is said to be without interruption, to be an abyss, where the most learned Historians lose themselves; they can find no sure footing, so that they themselves are forced to confess, that they floated upon the waves of a Sea subject to calms and tempests, to ebbing and flowing, if I may make use of their own expressions. Sometimes they see this Ship of *St. Peter* without Helm or Pilot, overwhelmed with the billows, without hope of a recovery or expectation of salvation for such as are there imbarqued. I have found that the Holiness wherewith this Church was adorned under the Conduct of its ancient Bishops, is at present much degenerated, an universal corruption hath spread it self into all the Members of this politick Body; so that where grace did formerly abound, there at present sin and heresie abound, to the shame and disgrace of Christianity. This I have found, as soon as I could open my eyes to take notice of such matters without prejudice or partiality, which we must banish from us if we will give a true judgment: This I have learned in the study of Holy Scripture, in the reading of the ancient Fathers of the Church, and from the Records of Antiquity, without the assistance of

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*Protestant* Books, or any information from Ministers.

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Antiquity hath always had a Command over the minds and judgments of men: We look commonly with a great deal of reverence and respect upon a head which time hath loaden with gray hairs, and which discovers the number of its years by the many wrinkles of its face; we see many times the ruins of an old Dwelling, encompassed about with a few rotten Oaks, is more looked upon than the noblest Palaces, reared up according to the newest and most regular form of Art; a Brass Medal shall be more esteemed than ten others of a more precious Metal; if it can but shew forth the Image and Name of some ancient Monarch, or of a Conquerour of former Ages. This respect, which Nature and Custome discover for things of a long continuance, is not disagreeable to the directions of Moral and of Christian Policy: We are to have more esteem for a State that hath subsisted a thousand years, than for another that hath continued but one or two hundred; and we are advised to have most regard for that Religion which can produce the ancientest Records, and prove its establishment to be the first.

This hath always been my judgment. As therefore I did look upon the Church of *Rome* as the most ancient, as that which had been founded by the Apostle *St. Peter*, as the *Romanists* would persuade us, I have for a long while entertained the greatest esteem  
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for her, and judged such as were not agreeable to her Principles to be but hasty productions of Nature, in comparison of an ancient Tree, or as Bastards in comparison of the Child well born. I did wonder how men could harbour any other thoughts. My Mind being thus filled with partiality for my ancient Religion, I could not imagin how any man of wit and ability, without being grievously blinded, could embrace any other. I did oft-times argue with my self in this manner: Is it possible, that there should be some men so silly and ridiculous, to prefer a Religion which we have seen in its Cradle, to another which hath continued sixteen hundred years; a Church formed by the wit of *Calvin* and *Beza*, and some others, to that which Christ and His Holy Apostles have established, &c. Thus it is, saith *Lactantius*, in his Book of the *Rise of Error*, l. 2. c. 7. Thus Antiquity commands the judgments of men: *Its authority is so great, that we look upon it as a crime to inquire into the qualities of that which is ancient, and to question its rights; credit is given to it at the first sight, as to a most known truth. In the same manner (saith that Author, l. 2. c. 8.) some imprudently neglect the advice of wisdom, approving without any examination the inventions of their forefathers, suffering themselves to be lead as beasts whithersoever others please, and not whither they should go. In this manner they are deceived, and are willing to be so, by taking for the rule of their faith the belief of their forefathers, out of a strong conceit, that they cannot be wiser than they were before, because they have succeeded them, and that it is not probable that they were deceived, seeing that they have preceded them and are named their ancestors.*

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These words of this wise man, and some passages of others, made me think, that it was not so great a crime as is declared in the Church of *Rome*, to examine the Antiquity of the Religion of our Forefathers, and to consider from whence it proceeds, whither it tends, what it hath been, what it should be, what are its Priviledges, Duties, Doctrine, Laws, Conduct; if that which is professed to day be the same as that of yesterday, that of this age be like to that of the first times, or whether it be not differing, or a strange Bastard put into the room of the true Child; whether it hath not robb'd the lawful Heiress of her Titles of Honour, usurped her Rights by counterfeir Letters, seised upon her Demesnes, driven her from her Inheritance; banished her out of her Dominion by a disguise under the most beautiful habits, and whether by this means the *Romish* Church hath not seated her self in the seat of the lawful, to procure unto her self a greater esteem amongst men, who have so much respect for things that appear with a grave and ancient countenance.

I have seriously examined these things, I have sought for the Rights and Titles of the Church of *Rome* amongst its pretended Ancestors, Christ, St. *Peter*, and St. *Paul*, who have been, saith she, my Founders and Apostles. I have read over the Priviledges that they ascribe to her, and the Duties that they require from her, that which she hath received from them, and that which they command her to have, the language which they teach her, and the Laws that they have given her, and how they behaved themselves that succeeded immediately after her  
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first Founders. When I had thus compared the one with the other, the present *Rome* with the ancient, the World that is now with that which was, the Children with the Father, that which is believed and preached at present with that which was believed and preached heretofore, that which was practised and that which is now done, that which is seen with that which was anciently; I have found, after a serious examination of all these things, that there can be nothing more contrary than these two things, the ancient Christian *Rome* and that which appears now, the Church then with the modern, the Faith and Christian Religion under the Popes Government with that Faith and Religion which the *Romans* first embraced, and professed a long whiles under the Teachers and Bishops which the Apostles left them. Let any man read over the Gospel and the Records of the Primitive Christians, since the time of the Apostles until the fourth or fifth Centuries; to seek what Church Jesus Christ established upon the unmoveable foundation of His Word and Merits; let him take notice of that which *St. Luke* describes better with his Pen than with his skilful Pencil, of that which all the approved Writers of the Ecclesiastical Affairs immediately succeeding do represent unto us, which professed no other belief but in Jesus Christ, which had rejected an Angel from Heaven, if he had preached any other Doctrine but that which is contained in the Holy Gospel, and in the other Books of Sacred Scripture. This Church acknowledged no other but Christ, looked upon such as named themselves of *Apollo's Party*,

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of *Peter's* or *Paul's*, as so many Sectaries, and allowed of no other Judge of Controversies and Governour but Jesus Christ. Call but to mind all that you have ever read or heard of this Church, since its beginning, until the time of the Bishop of *Rome's* usurpation of the Sovereign Power, under the name of *Pope*, and compare that Church of *Rome* with this in our days, examine the Tenents, Maxims, Laws, Behaviour, and Customs of both, and you will be forced to confess, that they are not the same, but two Churches, as much differing the one from the other as the day from the night. We must not therefore mention the Antiquity of this Church, but as of a languishing and decayed Body we may say she is ancient, in the same manner as we say of women that shamefully yield themselves to pleasure in their old age, whilst they were young, chaste, and beautiful, they were worthily esteemed and admired of every one, but since age and lechery, time and debauchery, seises upon them, they become so strangely altered, that they seem not to be the same persons. We must look upon the Church of *Rome* in this manner: She is no longer that beautiful Wonder, that ravishing Spouse, whose Picture *Solomon* labours to draw in *chap. 4. of the Canticles*; but an old Whore, the Mother of fornications and abominations of the earth, mentioned by *St. John, Revel. chap. 17.* She is old I confess, like unto those old Palaces, which time and want of repair have brought to ruin. I may express this by another resemblance: She is ancient, as are the old Bodies infected with Leprosie, and abounding with vicious humours, which.



which putrefie the older they grow; and corrupt the more with age, the continuance of the disease having so changed their constitution, that they are not to be known by the former idea's of their persons. In this manner the *Romish* Church may be said to be ancient: Antiquity doth but discover her shame, reveal her Apostacy, and declare her grievous Corruptions. Let us say something more to the purpose.

Men are known by their speech, the home-born Inhabitants of a Country are distinguishable from strangers by their language and pronunciation. I desire no more, to shew that the Church of *Rome* is not the true Church of Christ, and that the present Church is not the same as that which was first established: Listen to the language of both, and you shall find a vast difference; hearken to the Popes language and to that of Jesus Christ, to what the one commands and the other forbids, to what the first affirms and the latter denies, to what Christ with his Apostles preach and the Pope with his Doctors declare and publish. We need but read the Holy Gospel and the Decretals of *Rome*, the Scripture and the Canons of the Council of *Trent*, the Books of the ancient Fathers and the Belief of the *Jesuits* and of modern Authors; to understand, that the Church which stiles her self *Christian*, *Catholick*, *Apostolick*, and *Roman*, is nothing of all that, and deserves none of those glorious Titles, for she is neither *Christian*, nor *Catholick*, nor *Apostolick*, nor *Roman*, if we take the *Roman* Church for what she was anciently. She cannot be properly named *Christian*, because she acknowledgeth another Lord and Superiour besides Jesus Christ, and



denies Him to be the only Saviour of Men, ascribing this honour to the Virgin *Mary*, and others, by saying, that she may and doth save many by her interceding for them, that the Pope is able to do the like by pardoning their sins and granting unto them his Indulgences, and that they themselves may contribute to their own salvation by their good works, *etc.* She is not *Catholick*, in that sense which the *Romanists* give to this word, because she preaches a Doctrine not agreeable to that which God hath revealed to us by His Son and Ministers, and prefers her own Traditions before the Oracles of the Holy Scripture, because she invents many superstitious Laws which occasion grievous sins. She is not *Roman*, like unto that Church which was anciently so called, for besides that primitive Church, as we shall further take notice, never did claim an universal Dominion, for she did acknowledge the Churches of *Antioch*, *Alexandria*, and of *Jerusalem*, and others, to be her equals in all respects; therefore her Bishops never believed themselves to be their superiours, but their brethren and companions. The Christians of those days understood nothing of Indulgences, of Fraternities, of Holy-water, of Consecrated Crums, of Relicks and Repositories, of Medals and Beads, and other such like Baubles, in which the Church of *Rome* placeth the Holiness of Christianity. They knew nothing of Holy Bread, kept in little Tabernacles, to be there worshipped; they never had in their Churches Images, like to those of *Rome*, as may appear by the words of *Epiphanius*, who lived in the fourth Century, and writ to *John* the Patriarch of *Jerusalem* an Epistle,

pistle, which *St. Jerome* hath translated into *Latin*, and therefore declares the Judgment of those two Eminent Persons. In this Epistle he saith, that when he went into a Church, situate in a Country Village, he perceived upon the door a veil where there was an Image to be seen, therefore he caused it to be taken down, and to be torn in pieces, for, saith he, by this means men may introduce Idolatry amongst Christians. By this passage we may understand, that the Worship of Images was a strange thing in that Age, as other Historians, and after them *Baronius*, are forced to confess. Christians of those days did rather chuse to be burned alive and tormented, than to suffer the least grain of Incense to fall from their hands into that fire, which was intended to burn it in honour of an Image or Idol, which they were required to worship. Those wise and couragious Christians did chuse rather to behold their own Arms and Members consume in a fire, and endure the most sensible pains and tortures, than to behold the Smoak of Incense, fallen from their hands, mount up to the nose of a senseless Idol. They did rather chuse to expose themselves to the fury of the fires, and of drawn swords, and undergo the torments of the wheels, of the wild beasts, &c. than to bow their knees before a graven Image, and yield unto it the least respect. O *Romans* of our days! if any of the ancient Christians could but rise out of their graves, to come amongst you into your Churches on some Festival day, what would they say or think, when they should see the accomplishment of *Ezekiel's* Prophecy, *chap. 8.* so many abominations

minations in the midst of God's Sanctuary, the worship due to God alone paid to dumb Pictures which stand about the walls of your Temples? when they should see that your Christian Devotion consists chiefly in such apish tricks, in the kissing of Altars, in cringings, stretching out of your arms, and signs of the Cross often made, sometimes three or five times in kneeling before an Image, with hands lifted up, in offering to it frankincense, in numbring a few beads, in casting holy water upon the bones of the deceased, in burning a wax candle, put out and lighted again as many times as you have things to desire from a Saint, &c. How many tears would these ancient Catholick *Roman* Christians shed, when they should see this Church practising such foolish things, so much contrary to the Truth of Christian Religion? How many sighs, groans, and lamentations should we hear from their pious Souls? *Jeremiah* never uttered so many over the Ruins of *Jerusalem*. O *Rome! Rome!* would they say, what change is this? what are these impertinencies? what wonderful *metamorphosis*? Heretofore the Truth did command in thee over Error, the Laws of God over the Inventions of men, the Precepts of the Gospel over the Traditions of the people, and true Piety over Superstition, and God's Worship was chiefly regarded; but now we see the contrary. Therefore the Church of *Rome* which is now, is not the same as that Christian Church of *Rome* first established there, but a shadow of it, which hath nothing of its likeness. I would desire the *Papists* never to boast of the Age and Antiquity of their Church, they have

have no reason to glory, in that *Rome* was anciently one of the most famous Churches of *Christendom*, for it is not like what it was heretofore. *Miserum istud verbum fuisse*, saith *Seneca*. It is but a sad comfort, and a bad cause of glory, to say *we have been*, if we cannot say also we are yet. This the *Papists* should endeavour to make good unto us. They ought to shew us by their Doctrine and Works, that the Church of *Rome* at present is the same as it was of old, which cannot be done but by a reformation of all the abuses, and a réduction to the first estate, whilst they continue as they are, they shall never discover what their first fathers have been. The most learned of all their Doctors, who have undertaken to shew their conformity with the ancient Church of *Rome*, seem to be much perplex'd in the proving of this matter, very weak in their arguments, and so contrary to one another, that we need but their own Books to find out the falshood of their Doctrine. This every one may take notice, that will peruse them without partiality. I might here name an hundred passages out of their Books to prove the truth of what I say, but I think I have said enough to make the *Papists* apply unto themselves *Tertullians* reproach, directed to the Heathens, *Apol. adv. Gent. cap. 6.* Tell me, where is your Religion? where is that respect that ye owe to your forefathers? you are not like to them in your habits, in your manner of living, in your customs, opinions, and in your language: You praise antiquity, but every day you admit new inventions: You differ much from the worthy institutions of your predecessors: You declare by your behaviour, that you retain nothing.

nothing of those things that deserve to be retained, but observe that which deserves it not. This is a true representation of the Church of Rome.

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In the next place, that Sovereign Authority which this Church claims did seem to me to be very well grounded, when I did consider that which Jesus Christ saith to St. Peter in many occasions, especially in that where He tells him, immediately after the Confession of his Faith, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose in earth shall be loosed in heaven: Matth. 16.* By these words, Christ seems to give unto him and his Successors a full power, and more than to the rest. There are other passages of Holy Scripture that make for the same purpose, and St. *Austin*, and several other Interpreters, seem to favour this opinion; and Reason it self seems to teach us the necessity of a visible Head over Christ's Church on earth, answerable to its estate. In this manner I did argue with my Comrades, having been instructed in the Schools of *Thomas Aquinas*, *Suarez*, and others, that gather from thence many reasons to prove the Pope's Authority and Sovereignty. But when I had a little better examined these passages, perused the Writings of the Fathers, to understand their judgment of this matter, I have found that there is nothing more false

false than the Doctrines of the Popish Schools in this occasion; for Christ's words to St. Peter were not said to him alone, as may appear if we look into the Gospel, for Jesus Christ asked not only Peter, but all His Disciples, and Peter answers not only in his own name, but also in that of the rest of the Apostles, *in persona omnium Apostolorum* saith St. Ambrose, St. Chrysostome, and the other ancient Interpreters; which words the Papists have inserted into their *Breviarum*, or Rubrick, speaking of this passage: When therefore the Son of God returns unto St. Peter, as a reward of his confession, the power of binding and loosing, and the keys of heaven, &c. it is not to him alone that He speaks and grants all these privileges, but to the rest, in whole name St. Peter did answer, therefore a few days after He repeated unto them the same thing, and confirm'd the same privilege to all the rest of His Apostles, *whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven*, &c. *Matth. 18. vers. 18.* He addresseth Himself to them all, and not to one alone: And if after His Resurrection, Christ speaks to St. Peter only, *Feed my sheep*; this was as St. Cyril, and other wise Interpreters have taken notice, with an intent to confirm and re-admit him into the office of an Apostle, which he had renounced by his Apostacy from Christ. He had denied his Master thrice, therefore the Son of God proposes this question, *Lovest thou me?* three times. All this is noted in the Roman Rubrick. *Thrice* (saith St. Cyril, *lib. 12. chap. 64.*) *He commands him to feed His sheep, to renew unto him the dignity, and confirm him in the office of an Apostle, for fear that the denial of his*

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Lord, which he had been guilty of through the weakness of the flesh, should seem to have cashier'd him. For it is to contradict what Jesus Christ said to all His Apostles, when He appointed them to preach the Gospel to Mankind, to teach and baptize, &c. to say that none but St. Peter had this power granted to him.

But a great many passages of Holy Scripture do expressly contradict this Doctrine: *You have but one Master, but one Father, which is in heaven*, saith Jesus Christ, *Matth. 23. vers. 8. I am the good Shepherd, I know my Sheep, and lay down my life for them*: He saith not, I am an hired Shepherd, but the true Shepherd, *John 11*. As there is but one Flock, there can be but one Shepherd; now who is this Shepherd, Christ or the Pope? *My Father hath given me all power, in heaven and in earth, Matth. 28. I have power to pardon sins on earth, Mark 2. 10. God hath committed all judgment unto me*, and power to execute judgment, *John 5*. How can these passages agree with the Popes Sovereign Authority? Is it not a grievous affront offered to Jesus Christ, to set this Divine Saviour aside, as *Bellarmin* doth, *secluso Christo*, to help up the Pope to his Throne, and invest him into his usurped Sovereignty? If we are to acknowledge but one Shepherd, but one Master, but one Lord, but one Heir of the Fathers Power and Authority, shall we not rob Christ of these His Divine Prerogatives, if we should offer to bestow them upon the Pope?

I am not ignorant of all the distinctions made use of in this occasion, to justify the Pope from this Usurpation, but they are but philosophical and airy distinctions, of the same nature as are commonly  
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invented by the wit of man, to justify *Aristotle* from his Belief and Doctrine of the Worlds Eternity; *Thomas Aquinas*, and others, from their saying that the Virgin *Mary* was conceived in sin; *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *St. Bernard*, and others, from teaching that the Souls of Saints are not admitted to the Vision of God before the day of Judgment. They are such like distinctions as the *Pirrhonians* invented, to prove that white was black, that a hat was the same as a slipper, and an Ape like a Lion, &c. All these arguments and distinctions might be well refuted from the mouth of *Aristotle*, of *Plato*, *Pythagoras*, or from a *Cartesian* Philosopher, but not from a Catholick Christian, who ought not to mind what he might say, but what he should believe in conscience; not what he can maintain, but what he is bound to embrace. When an Article of our Faith is concerned, such a one must set aside his disputing humour, and the quirks and tricks of Logick, taught him in the Schools, to make a plain and sincere profession of the Truth. For my part, I think it is the best, to declare ingenuously, that there can be no solid reason found out, to authorize our ascribing to a man that which belongs to Jesus Christ alone by his own words. No man can justly condemn me, for having denied to the Pope, that which I read in the Gospel to be Christs Prerogative only: *It is not possible*, saith an ancient Father, *to give too much to God*; especially when man enters into competition with Him.

But listen, I pray, to what the Apostles and primitive Fathers say upon this Article: *There is one sovereign or great Shepherd of our Souls*, saith *St. Peter*,

*Ep. 1. chap. 5. with whom, when He shall appear, we shall appear also with Him in glory; such as feed the flock of Christ committed to their charge, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over Gods heritage, but, &c.* Doth St. Peter establish here the Popes Monarchy? doth not he rather undermine the foundation of it? No man, saith St. Paul, can lay another foundation but that which is already laid, Jesus Christ. There is one Lawgiver. Who art thou, saith St. James, that judgest another? He hath the Keys of David, that opens and none can shut, that shuts and no man can open, Revel. 3. How doth this agree with that which the Papists would persuade us of St. Peter, and of the Pope? Ought we not to gather from these passages, Doctrines contrary to their belief? No man can lay another foundation, &c. They are therefore much deceived, that affirm, that St. Peter is the foundation of the Christian Church, and that the Pope is the head. There is but one Lawgiver, the Pope therefore hath no authority to command and appoint Laws: He is to be looked upon as a Deceiver, when he would persuade us, that they are all out of the Church, that will not acknowledge his power. Jesus Christ hath the Key of Heaven, He opens and no man can shut, &c. I must therefore seek an entrance from Him, if He opens me the door, I shall be admitted, maugre the Pope, his Priests and Excommunications; if He shuts it to me, the Pope hath no Absolution nor Indulgence of a sufficient efficacy and power to open it. All the primitive Doctors confirm this Doctrine, they ascribe to Jesus Christ

Christ only, that which the *Papists* ascribe to St. Peter, and to the Pope, whom they have made his Successor. When Jesus Christ (saith St. Chrysostome, Tom. 3. Ser. de pent.) hath said, upon this Rock I will build my Church, He did not say upon Peter, for He hath not built His Church upon a man, but upon this Faith. What means (saith St. Austin, Tract. 10. in Epist. Joan.) what means He by these words, upon this Rock I will build my Church? He means upon this Faith, because he had said, Thou art Christ the Son of the living God. St. Ambrose, St. Hilary, Theophylact, and many others, affirm the same thing. Optat. Millevitanus speaking of Pope Siricius, he doth not call him Master or Holy Father, &c. but Noster Socius, our Companion, Contra Parmen. lib. 2. Art thou bordering upon Achaia (saith Tertullian, de Prat. cap. 36.) thou art near to Corinth, if thou art joyning to Macedonia thou hast Philippi Thessalonica, if thou canst go over into Asia thou shalt find Ephesus, and if thou neighbourst upon Italy thou art not far from Rome, where we have authority.

Thus the Primitive Fathers discourse unto us of the Church of Rome. They never ascribed unto her any more power or privilege, than to all the other Churches. Let any man therefore judge, what impudency and presumption the Popes are guilty of, in that they claim a Sovereign Power, not only over Spiritual Affairs, but also over the temporal, in all Christian Kingdoms. How blind, or rather how malicious, must the Popish Divines be, to employ all their learning and skill in maintaining of this Doctrine? I am perswaded, that there are but few that commit this sin out of ignorance. Do you judge if  
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it be not a grievous blasphemy, to extol the Pope as those Doctors do, and to appropriate unto him these Titles and Praises given him by some Councils; for example, that which Pope *Nicholas II.* said of himself, *Can. omnes dist. 22. That he was invested with the Empire of Heaven and Earth.* And *Martin V.* named himself, *The Light of the world, and the Father of Kings, &c.* The modestest of them all have suffered themselves to be called, without renting their garments, as *Paul* and *Barnabas* once did in a like occasion, *The King of Kings, the Sovereign of the world, the Judge of all Controversies, from whose Sentence there is no appeal to God's Tribunal, for it were to appeal from one to the same Being, for God's Authority and that of the Popes is but the same;* as if the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and the Pope, were but one God. They name him also, *the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, God's Majesty on earth, the Brightness of God's Presence, the Bridegroom of the Christian Church, the Lion of the Tribe of Juda, God's Vicegerent, the Holy of Holies, Infallible, Almighty, &c.* The Popes have claimed these and many other Titles, which I am ready to shew, not only in the Writings of the *Roman* Doctors, but also in their Rubricks, if any man shall question what I now say. They have claimed them both by word and deed, requiring the Kings themselves to kiss their slippers, and with their feet they have cast down the Crowns of Emperours from their heads, as Pope *Celestin* treated *Henry the Sixth*: They have trampled them under their feet, as *Alexander* did the Crown of *Frederick Bar-barossa*. What may be more said of Jesus Christ, to  
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put a difference between him and the Pope? Here is the fulfilling of all the Impieties which *St. Paul* did foretell, *2 Thess. 2. v. 3. The man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God; on that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God.*

§.

The pretended Succession of the *Roman* Bishops, so much spoken of in their Writings, and in the Pulpits of that Church, did seem to me to be very well grounded in Holy Scripture; and by the continued Catalogue of all the Popes, which the modern Popish Authors have gathered from the ancient Historians, I did judge, that this was but the consequence of Christ's promise to *St. Peter*, when He told him, *that his faith should never fail, and that the gates of hell should never prevail against his Church.* I was persuaded, that this was plainly to be seen in the Church of *Rome*; that above sixteen hundred years no Schism hath been so great, as to hinder the Popes to succeed one after another. There is no place in the world, where so long and noble a Catalogue is to be seen, and a Succession of so many lawful Bishops.

But since I have curiously examined the Truth, since I have look'd into the Histories to find out this continued Succession of *Roman* Bishops for so many years, I have found the Writers so perplex'd upon this Subject, nay the *Papists* themselves are so obscure and ambiguous, that we may justly say, that the most part of them speak they know not what, for  
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most of them are guilty of contradiction; for how can they agree this continued Succession without interruption, with what *Onuphrius* saith in his *Chronicle*, where he mentions no less than six and twenty Schisms in the Church of *Rome*, the twentieth lasted forty years, and the twenty sixth continued since *Urbanus VI.* until the Council of *Constance*, as *Genebrard* saith, *Chron. lib. 4. an. 1378.* the one and twentieth lasted six and thirty years, as the same Author affirms, during all this time the Church of *Rome* had two Popes, that did excommunicate one another, *Ann. 1389?* How can we agree this Succession with what *Baronius* saith? for he is forced to acknowledge it, after so many Historians, that at *Rome* there have been no less than three Popes together, whom he names *tricipitem bestiam portis inferis emergentem*, tom. 11. and *ann. 1044. sect. 5.* a beast with three heads ascending out of the bottomless pit.

All three saith *Bellarmin*, namely, *Gregory XIII.* *Benedictus XIII.* and *John XXIII.* had the same apparent right to the Popes Miter, *de pontif. lib. 4. c. 14.* How can we also agree this Doctrine with *Baronius*, *an. 912. sect. 8?* He saith, *That the Clergy were not admitted to the Election, that the Canons were not observed, and all ancient Customs of choosing Popes set aside: what Cardinals think ye* (saith he) *that these Monsters did create? for according to the usual course of nature every thing begets its likeness, &c.* *Lechery* (saith *Platin* in *vita Benedicti*) brought forth these Monsters, these Prodigies, who by ambition and gifts have intruded themselves in, and not lawfully enjoyed *St. Peter's Chair.* See what the Historians of the Church of *Rome* have been



been forced to acknowledge, although they have endeavoured to palliate its imperfections, and hide them from the knowledge of the world. How can any have the impudency to maintain, that the Faith of this Church hath never failed; that the gates of hell could never prevail against it; and that there was never any discontinuance in the succession of its Bishops, &c. Yet this is impudently affirmed, with allowance, in the Schools of the *Papists*. This Doctrine I have also heretofore defended in *Theses*, which I published amongst them: That although the Election of the *Roman* Bishops hath passed almost at every time by bribes, fraud, violence, murder, &c. Although the Church of *Rome* hath been frequently, and for a long while, divided into Sects and Factions, and that much disorder hath happened in it, nevertheless we ought to believe and affirm, that the Holy Ghost did govern these Elections, and that they were by Gods appointment, and that the Faith of this Church hath never failed, because I did suppose there hath always been a wonderful agreement between all its Members, &c. Let any man judge, if ever *Arius*, *Pelagius*, *Marcion*, or any other Heretic, did ever teach such impudent Doctrine as this; in *Mahomet's Alcoran* there is no absurdity found like unto it.

The great crowd of Martyrs, and the multitude of other Noble Saints, who have performed so many Miracles, and are challenged by the *Papists* as their

own; was another powerful motive, to persuade me of the Truth of their Faith, and of the Sanctity of their Religion. Who is it, said I to my self, that dares deny, that a Religion where so many Martyrs appear, that have laid down their Lives for Christ's Cause, where so many Saints have observed the Rules of the Gospel, and made such a glorious profession of all Christian Virtues; a Religion, where so many pious Souls do yet live a very exemplary and a holy life, having forsaken the World to confine themselves to a Convent: Who dares deny such a Religion to be the best, the securest, and the holiest of all? In this manner I did argue, and many judicious Persons suffer themselves to be thus deceived with a false appearance.

But such as will, as I have done, look more narrowly to this particular, and weigh every thing in the Scales of the Sanctuary, shall find by experience, that the Church of *Rome* hath no cause to glory so much in them. There are many Martyrs reckoned in the Church of *Rome*, I confess, but this is no infallible proof of its excellency: There have been many also in the Churches of *Jerusalem*, of *Antioch*, of the *Georgians*, *Muscovites*, *Greeks*, &c. yet the *Papists* esteem them not the more. But they say that many Saints in this Profession have, and do yet perform notable Miracles. I have cause to question the truth of this Assertion, for many false ones are published; but when they should be real, they are no infallible signs of the Truth of their Faith, for the Magicians of *Egypt*, by Gods permission, did also work Miracles, *Exod. chap. 7*. God, whose Secrets and

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Judgments are not to be searched out, may suffer the Devil to keep men in ignorance by this means. But the *Papists* say, that amongst them many Religious Persons are to be seen, that lead a most holy life. I answer, that they are for the most part but whited Sepulchres, and that this is the Devils cunning to deceive Souls. I shall say something more in this Chapter. But what advantage do they expect from this Argument? There are men of honesty every where, amongst the Heathens and Hereticks as well as amongst the Christians and Catholicks there are persons of good behaviour, or at least appear so to the world. This is therefore no infallible sign of a true Religion, but suppose it were so, that the holiness and integrity of life were an infallible sign of the Truth, the *Papists* will never be able to better their Cause by this reason, unless their Chief and Governours, who are to be look'd upon as the Paterns of the rest, change their manner of living. The Church of *Rome* is not so holy, as it is said to be to the simple people, ignorant of the Affairs of that City. Examine the Transactions there now, and within this eight or nine hundred years. If we did but see the disorders of this Church plainly presented unto us, we should have cause to wonder at the things related by the *Papists* themselves of their Popes. I shall here mention some of them, and that I may not be traduced as a Liar, I shall bring two or three of their own famous Writers speaking of the Court of *Rome*, such I mean who endeavour to cover its imperfections, and have never made use of their Pens but in its defence. The first is devout St. Bernard, Ser. 1,

de Convers. Pauli: This man's integrity can never be suspected. In this manner he speaks of the Court of Rome: Iniquity proceeds from the grave Judges, who are named Christ's Vicegerents, and who seem to govern His people. Of them we cannot say, As is the People so is the Priest; for the people were not like or so bad as the Priest. And elsewhere, de Confid. ad Eugen. lib. 1. cap. 4. From all parts of the world, the ambitious, the covetous, and persons guilty of simony, sacrilege, debauchery and incest, and such like vices, did flock to Rome, to get the Ecclesiastical Honours, for to keep them by the Pope's Authority. About the year 897, Cardinal Baroni<sup>us</sup> affirms, That there were the most wicked Varlets brought in to sit in St. Peter's Chair, men of most infamous lives, most fearfully debauch'd, of a corrupt and filthy behaviour, every where, and in every respect. And when he speaks of the year 900, he intreats the weaker sort of Christians not to be offended from thenceforth, if they see sometimes the abomination of desolation in the Temple of God. Afterwards he cries out, what horrible manners were introduced into this See, which the Angels respect? O disgrace! O grief! how many evils have proceeded from them? how many grievous tragedies have been acted by them? what villanies have been here committed in this glorious See? what filthy and base actions have appeared here? &c. In the year 912, he saith, sect. 8. this Church was so debauch'd and swimming in vice, That the filthiest and the noted whores did govern all at Rome. At their pleasure the See was disposed of, the Bishops were created, and their Favourites and Gallants were chosen in St. Peter's Chair to be Popes. This is what Baroni<sup>us</sup> hath been

been forced to acknowledge, after many other Historians, who have recorded the disorders of the Roman Church. Let any man read *Genebrard, Chron. l. 4. ad ann. 902. Isidor, Pelenf. l. 3. epist. 323. Baptif. Mantuan. de calam. suorum temp. l. 3. Aluar. Pelag. de planctu Ecclesiæ.* Or let any man go to Rome, to see how such behave themselves, who pretend to be established of God to govern His Church on earth; and they shall find there more wickedness than ever was in Sodom or in Nineveh. Let Rome be therefore asbared, saith a Learned Man who beheld these abominations, *Claud. Espens. in Epist. ad Tit. c. 1. Let her never offer to shew a Catalogue of her shameful Crimes.* I would advise her to not mention nor produce this Calendar of so many Saints, whom she hath canonised, and in whom she glories so much; for all those former Saints discover her shame, seeing that the Lives of the present Popes and Governours are quite contrary to theirs; therefore she hath no cause to challenge them as her own. Those former Worthies are her reproach and condemnation, because she doth not imitate their Examples. Nevertheless the Popish Doctors are so impertinent, to boast of these disorders, vices, and abominations, and to gather from thence reasons to prove the truth and holiness of their Religion. Who would believe that *Baronius*, after that he had filled his *Annals* with the filthy debaucheries of many Popes, should gather from thence a conclusion to the advantage of his Church? Yet this he doth very boldly; for when he hath taken notice of the debauch'd and abominable Lives of some Popes, declared their vices in a most horrible manner, and

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acknowledged all that hath been written of them by his predecessors to be very true, that there have been Popes very *ambitious, covetous, symoniacal, impious, Murderers, lecherous, incestuous, Atheists, and Sodomites*; which things the *Papists* cannot deny, because their own Historians declare them. Nevertheless, when *Baronius* hath said all this of the Popes, he concludes, as boldly as if he had to prove the Divinity of Jesus Christ, That all these Vices, by which St. Peter's Chair hath been dishonoured, are proofs of its Holiness, Excellency, and Infallibility; because, saith he, God hath permitted all these debaucheries and wickednesses in such as were the Governours of His Church without punishing them; this discovers that this Estate is more sacred, more holy, and more regarded of God, than that of Kings; whom God commonly chastiseth as soon as they are unfaithful and abuse their Authority. I must needs confess, that I was never more astonished, than when I found this Argument made use of by this Learned Man, and heard it approved of in the Popish Schools: Me thinks I could as easily prove the union of Contraries to be found in the same Subject, as to shew the union and correspondency of this Conclusion with the Principles from whence it is drawn. In this Church most abominable Popes have been seen. *Alvar. Pelag.* a Portuguese Bishop, tells us, *lib. 2. art. 15.* of many Popes, who have crept into that See by their factions, agreements, covenants, and large promises; and when they have got in, all their endeavour was to enrich and raise their Relations, to promote their friends to the chief Offices, to live themselves in pleasure, and



to disguise their Kindred, building Towers and Palaces in Babylon, I mean Rome, so called by St. Jerome. These Popes have fomented the Wars and Factions in Italy, instead of maintaining the unity of the Church: They have wasted the sacred Revenues, advanced most unworthy persons, and gloried in their chariots, elephants, horses, rich garments, numerous train, guards, and noble attendants: They have by the power of the sword often endeavoured to enlarge their own Borders, and seize upon the Territories of their neighbouring Princes, never minding the salvation of souls, but have been addicted to the pleasures of the flesh, &c. These Men for money have sold, as Judas did, Christ's Body, consecrated the Sacraments, and celebrated Orders for silver, &c. We have seen, (saith the same Author, lib. 2. art. 2. fol. 104.) men that have made this City like Sodom and Nineveh, by letting in, and countenancing all manner of vices, publick and private, as covetousness, ambition, simony, usurpations, uncleanness, vain glory, envy, tyranny, and other crimes which cannot nor ought not to be named. We have seen in God's sanctuary (saith the Bishop of Bitonte, in the beginning of the Council of Trent, orat. hab. in concil. Trid. sess. 1.) shameless monsters, rotten vessels full of infection, publick plagues, &c. so that there remains no appearance nor hopes of good life, but an immoderate and extraordinary debauchery, a notable impudency, more crimes than can be well credited. We have seen (according to the testimony of some Cardinals, chosen by Pope Paul III. for the Reformation of the Church, Concil. delect. Cardin. tom. 3. pag. 823.) whores walking about the streets of Rome as honourable Dames, carried upon Mules, attended and waited upon by Noblemen and

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*Cardinals Chaplains, such like scandals have never been seen elsewhere but in this City.* We have seen (saith *Guischardin*, Hist. of Italy, lib. 1. sect. 2.) *Rodericus Borgia*, who was afterwards Pope *Alexander VI.* buy the priviledge of disposing of the Holy Treasury. And *Platina* and *Baronius* relate, that there have been some Popes introduc'd by violence, who have clapp'd in prison such as were before in possession of the See of Rome, as *Christopher* did *Leo VIII.* Some have been so base and furious, that they have taken up the Bodies of their Predecessors, whose Fingers, wherewith they had given their blessing to the people, they have cut off and cast into the Tyber, as *Stephen VI.* treated *Formosus*. In short, we have seen men more covetous, ambitious, impious, lecherous, cruel, and wicked, than in the most licentious Courts, than amongst the most barbarous Nations. And *Genebrard. Chron. lib. 4.* saith, that these disorders have lasted sometimes 150 years together. During this time, saith *Baronius*, ann. 912. sect. 8. *Jesus Christ slept very soundly in the bottom of the ship, and wink'd at all these mischiefs.* Therefore from hence he gathers this conclusion, for this cause the Church of Rome must needs be the truest, the holiest, and best beloved of God, infallible, and the only Church that may be named *Catholic*, &c. Let any man judge, if this be not the most impudent and unjust reasoning in the world: The Heathenish Philosophers have taught these Popish Doctors to argue in this manner for their Religion, from this ancient Maxim of theirs, *Ex quolibet fit quodlibet*: That from any Principle we may draw any Conclusion, either good or evil: They  
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care not so they can but maintain their *Thesis* and Opinion; but these kind of Reasons discover their weakness: For any Understanding may perceive from thence the feebleness of their Doctrine, the falshood of their Religion, seeing that they are driven to draw such Conclusions as are quite contrary to the nature and truth of the things themselves. If any man say that this Reason is not in *Baronius*, word for word as I have expressed it; the premises are there, and the Conclusion, not in two or three words, and in such a plain and succinct manner as I have here related it, but it is laid down in a more ample, and more florid Discourse, which tends to no other end, but to prove the Truth, Holiness, and Excellency of of the *Papish* Religion, from the Vices and Debaucheries of its Priests and Popes. This cannot but be look'd upon as very ridiculous by any man of Judgement. For if their Reasons were good, I might as well say that *Pharaoh's* Kingdom was holy, because God suffered it to continue so long without punishing him, and did many Miracles for his sake; and that the *Turkish* Religion must needs be the holiest and the best at present, because God hath suffered it to abide so many years, and increaseth every day, although its Chieftains lead most filthy lives.

These and such like Considerations, which I have had by reading the Books of the *Papish* Doctors and Historians, have lessened that vast esteem that I had formerly for that Church, and made me to understand, that all its excellent Priviledges which it claims, and which they assign to her, are but whimsies and *Chimera's* begot in their fancy by their fondness

fondness for their Religion, the Popes ambition, and the credulity of silly minds, who are ready to believe any thing, the greatest absurdity, if boldly asserted. Let us proceed next to our other Considerations.

THE SECOND PART.

THE Second Reason that hath so long time kept my Mind in a bállance, was groundd upon the Faith and Articles of that Church. I did seriously examine all those things which she engageth us to believe as infallible Truths, the Pope's Infallibility, the real and corporal presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Purgatory, the Invocation of Saints, and the certain damnation of all those who acknowledge not the Pope for their Superiour, &c. I thought all this to be very true, when I look'd upon it with the Popish Spectacles which they give to all that read their Writings, or study in their Schools, and judg'd this Church to be the best and holiest. Hath not Jesus Christ said, I have promised to St. Peter, *that his Faith should never fail?* doth not he mean that his Successors should be always *infallible?* hath he not said in celebrating his Holy Supper, that the Bread was his *Body*, and the Wine his *Blood*, expressly, and in proper terms? &c. In this manner I did argue upon all the Articles of the Popish Faith, concluding always to its advantage.

But when I had more narrowly Examined these matters alone, without partiality, I found that I was very

very far from Truth; that all these Articles of Faith were not conformable to Holy Scripture, but altogether contrary; and the Popish Religion opposite to that of Jesus Christ, of the Apostles, and of the Primitive Fathers.

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For where shall we find any thing of the Pope's Infallibility in the Holy Scripture? shall not we find rather, that the holiest of men *are liars*? Psal. 115. 11. and 61. 10. *That we fail all in many things, and that if any man fails not in word, he may boast of being a perfect man.* Jam. 3. and St. John informs us, that we are all Sinners. Moreover, this Infallibility is according to the judgment of the Popish Doctors, one of its Divine Attributes, stiled by them Uncommunicable, how can they therefore say that God hath given it to a man? and why to the Pope of all other men? seeing that according to the *Papists* confession, he is many times a very wicked man. And St. Peter himself, unto whom the Son of God had promised that his Faith should never fail, from whence they would establish this Doctrine, was guilty of a great mistake concerning the Circumcision of the Jews and Gentiles, as St. Paul affirms, *I have resisted him to his face, saith he, for he was to be blamed.* Is it possible, that the Pope, chosen by a company of men who know not whom they pitch upon, and promoted many times by Legerdemain, by Bribes, subtilty, temporal Interests, Princes favours? Is it possible, that these Popes, who are

to be all *Italians* born, elected out of the number of Cardinals, and so aged, that they can scarce do any good, but by others? Is it possible that these Popes, promoted by the assistance of Whores, and the Cardinals Courtizans, as *Baronius* and *Belkarmin*, and others acknowledge, should be more infallible than *St. Peter*, chosen by Christ himself? How can we imagin that such a man should be a Treasury intrusted with Divine knowledge and the will of God? that his voice pronounced out of his Chair, should be the voice of Heaven; that he should be able to cause the Holy Ghost to go and come at his pleasure; and to oblige God to ratifie and confirm all his Laws in the World, to command when he commands, to prohibit when he prohibits, to damn when he damns, and to save when he saith the word! Before we can believe this, they must deprive us of our judgments, and make us become beasts before we can become Christians, and deal with us worse than *Mahomet* deals with his *Mussulmans*.

The Pope, being assisted by some of his Brethren, hath pronounced the Sentence; which they say is, *ex Cathedra*, and condemned *Jansenius* and his followers, he hath declared them to be Hereticks; must I believe it as an Article of Faith? because he saith, that in the Book of this Learned Bishop there are five Propositions, the same as were condemned heretofore in *Calvin*, and that only from the information of the holy Fathers the *Jesuits*: Must I take all this as an Article of my Faith; although *Mr. Arnaldus*, and other Doctors of the Port-Royal have proved to all that can but read, that these

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Propositions are not be found in his Books. The Pope saith that *Peter d'Acantara*, *Francis de Sales*, and *Pius V.* are He-Saints in Heaven; that *Mary Magdalen* of *Pazzi*, *Mother Rose*, and others, are She-Saints; he commands us to pray to them: If I doubt of it, and speak as the wise Son of *Sirach*, *Eccel. 9.* whose Book is received amongst the Canonical, *That no body knows whether he be worthy of love or hatred*, much less doth he know this of others: if I should say as the Gospel, that it belongs to God to judge men, and that *all Judgment is left unto Jesus Christ*; or as *St. Paul*, that the *Judgments of God are unsearchable*, and that therefore I leave it to him; I am an Heretick amongst the *Papists*. Since these He and She-Saints have been Canonized, it is become an Article of Faith to believe them in Heaven: Before I was at my own choice, to credit what I pleased; but since that time I am no longer free, the Pope hath said it, we must therefore believe it: if I despise their Mediation, if I neglect to pray to them, out of a distrust of their happiness and credit with God; I am an Infidel, and an Athiest, in the judgment of the *Papists*. Is not this to mock God and men?

Some of them answer, that the Pope may erre in matters of fact, but not in matters of right, *Bellarmin. de Po. l. 4. cap. 2.* But we all know that most of their questions of right depend upon matters of Fact; and that the judgment of right, which concerns not only the Doctrines of the Holy Scripture, but an infinit number of other things received by Tradition, proceeds from the testimony and information

mation which they have received of several matters of Fact. Suppose therefore that all these informations should be false, as they may be; for the Pope, who only is to be look'd upon as Infallible, according to the *Papists* Doctrine, hath not seen all these things, he believes it from the testimony of others. For Example; It is an Article of Faith amongst them, that *St. Peter hath been twenty five years Bishop of Rome*; that he hath added the word *enim* to the words of the Consecration, saying, *Hoc est enim corpus meum*; and not as it is in the Gospel, *Hoc est corpus meum*: that he did *mingle water with the Wine*, in the Mass. If these things, that are all matters of fact, which cannot be proved by Holy Scripture, be false, as we have cause to imagin, what certainty can we have of the right and truth which depends upon it?

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Moreover, I find the *Papists* Sacrament of the Lords Supper differing very much from the description which Christ and his Apostles have left us. It is *the bread of life*, say the *Romanists*, *the bread of Angels*, *the Heavenly bread*, *the Body and Bloud of Jesus Christ*: I have always believed it to be so, I think there is no good Christian that doubts of it. We all know that it is no *common Bread*, no body will contradict them in this, *St. Justin* shall not be condemned for affirming it. That the Bread becomes the *Body* of Christ, and the Wine his *Blood*, &c. all this is well and very true, we are not ignorant that *St. Ambrose*, *St. Chrysostome*, *St. Austin*, *St. Cyril* of

of *Jerusalem*, and many other ancient Doctors name it so. But how can the *Papists* shew by the Holy Scripture that Christ is there, in the same manner as they affirm, by a real presence, which is not only spiritual, but material and corporal? That he is there in the same manner as he was of old in the Virgins womb, in the manger of *Bethlehem*, upon Mount *Tabor*, and upon the Cross, and nevertheless that he is in the highest Heavens, at the right hand of God the Father? Where can they find in all the four Evangelists any Text that mentions this prodigious Miracle of the *Transubstantiation*, or transmutation of the bread into the real Body of Jesus Christ, and of the wine into his Blood, with a destruction of the first, and a creation of the latter, by the efficacy of four words uttered by a Priest? Where is there a Writer of the *Greek*, or of the ancient *Latin Church*, that speaks of this Mystery in the same manner as *Thomas Aquinas*; who maintained a corporal presence multiplied, without division; accidents sustained without their proper substance; a discontinuance of a being, without corruption; a production of the same effects by a cause that is not; an humane and divine substance under the appearance of a Wafer; a God made man, where nothing of his manhood is to be seen; a body without extension; a life without motion; an infinite number of equal parts, proportionable to their totum in a Mathematical point; a relation from the same to the same, from the first to a second, who are but one; a situation without space; an ubiquity without place; a general destruction of all Predicaments by this supposed Mystery, or *Manhu*, as he calls it: a word which expresseth

expresseth the admiration of the *Israelites*, when they saw the *Manna* fall amongst them. Did ever *St. Ambrose*, *St. Chrysostome*, or any of the four chief Doctors of the Christian Church speak in this manner? they did never imagine that so many absurdities could enter into the minds of men. I am perswaded, that if this Doctor, stiled by them the Angelick Doctor, because of the rare Inventions of his Wit, had lived in the days of *St. Austin*, and had spoken unto him in these terms, that Primitive Father would never have understood him, although he understood the Predicaments of *Aristotle* without Tutor: doubtless he had taken him for a man fallen from the Clouds, dwelling in the Globe of the Moon, or for one that maintains that there is there another World.

Where have they seen in Holy Scripture, or amongst the ancient Fathers, *That the Lay-men must not communicate in both kinds; that the Mass is a Sacrifice where the Passion of our Saviour is really renewed; that Jesus Christ will be there worshipped in a visible manner, by an adoration that relates to the substances, as God himself, if he were to be seen; according to the Command of the Council of Trent?* I have been several years reading and perusing the Holy Scriptures and its Interpreters, but I have found nothing there like to these Doctrines, unless it be in the Popish Authors; for I have met with an hundred passages contrary to this belief. I confess we find in Holy Writ that Christ hath said, *This is my Body*; but he hath said also, *I am the Door, I am the Stone, I am the Vine, and the Shepherd of the Sheep, &c.*

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If we are to take all these expressions in a literal sense, we must believe that he is a *Door*, a *Stone*, a *Vine*, a *Shepherd of Sheep*. But the Scripture saith that *Jesus Christ is ascended up into Heaven*, and that *he sits there at the right hand of God the Father*. Therefore he is no longer upon Earth; for it is not possible that the same Body should be in two distinct places at once: If that were likely, as the Philosophers tell us, the same Body might be in twenty, in an hundred, in a thousand, and in ten thousand places in the same moment: From hence we might conclude, that it is possible to make one man become a great Army; that one man should kill himself a thousand times, and yet continue alive; that he should be a Saint in one place, and a Devil in another; damned in one place, and saved in another; the object of Gods wrath and goodness at the same time: these are impossibilities, and plain contradictions. Christ commands us *to do this in Remembrance of Him*; therefore he is not there really and bodily; for we do nothing in remembrance of a man present before us in a corporal manner. The *Papists* instance the *Manna*, which was kept by God's command in the Ark, in remembrance of that which God sent down from Heaven; which was both the remembrance, and the thing remembered; the representation, and the thing represented. This is one of the most plausible Examples of the *Papists*, but it is to little purpose; for besides other Reasons that may be alledged against it, I think they are mightily mistaken, to compare a *totum integrans* with an individual one; and

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the same may be divided; and the parts carried into several distinct places, where they may be look'd upon in divers manners; but the other is altogether repugnant to division and separation. The *Manna* that was in the Ark, I confess, was a memorial of that *Manna* which the *Israelites* had fed upon in the Wilderness; but it was not the same. How can they therefore from hence conclude, that Christ's body must be in several places under distinct notions? *Christ* informs us, *That His words are spirit and life; and that the flesh profiteth nothing; that it is the spirit that quickens.* It is not possible to speak any thing more contrary than this, to the *Papists* Doctrine; for these words assure us that Christ is there really, and in truth, but *spiritually*, not *corporally*, nor *substantially*; that He is there by his Spirit, virtue, and efficacy, to produce the same effects in us as if he were there in a sensible manner. This was taught by the Primitive Fathers, and thus the *Protestants* believe it. He commands us also *To eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood*, in both kinds: *St. Paul* repeats the words; and the Council of *Constance*, which is esteemed by the *Papists* as highly as a fifth Evangel, saith that since the Apostles time Communicants did receive in both kinds; wherefore did they then take away the Cup? why did they establish this Law, that forbids Lay-men to drink of the Cup? They acknowledge, that Jesus Christ hath appointed it to be so; that the Apostles did practice and command it; and that it had been an universal custom amongst Christians, for all men to communicate in both kinds. Nevertheless this Council was so insolent



solent to forbid it, and command the World to believe that this Prohibition proceeds from the Holy Ghost, although it be contrary to Christ's Institution, to the Apostles Doctrine, and the Practice of the first Christians; we must have a notable Faith to believe this. The inconveniencies which they mention to colour their Change are ridiculous. They tell us, that some men wear long Beards, and that a drop of Christ's Blood may chance to drop upon them; and that some that are sick may by this means give their Diseases to others, &c. But how comes it to pass that Jesus Christ did not foresee all these inconveniencies? were the Bishops of this Council wiser than Christ himself? Did not the men of our Saviour's days, and in the Primitive time wear long Beards? were they not as subject to spreading Diseases, as well as in the time of this Council? St. Paul tells us that Jesus Christ hath offered himself up *once for all*, as a Sacrifice; but they affirm that he offers himself not only once, but every day, and a thousand times a day; and in a thousand distinct places, in every corner where the Mass is sung, which is, say they, *a true and real Sacrifice of the Body of Jesus Christ*. Whom must we believe? what the *Papists* say? or what St. Paul? But suppose the Mass were a true and real Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, a second death, and his very Passion, as they teach; are not their Priests Murderers and Executioners? from whence proceeds this effect? is it not from a real cause that is in them? Whence is this Sacrifice, is it not from a true and real Sacrificator? Moreover, according

to their own Doctrine, three conditions are chiefly required in every Sacrifice, the Offering, the Consecration, and the Destruction; where shall they find the latter in this Sacrifice of the Mass? Do they destroy the Body of Jesus Christ? if they answer, that they destroy the Bread and the Wine, they don't answer to the question; for it must be the Sacrifice that must be consumed and destroyed; for either we must say that only the Bread and the Wine are sacrificed, or that the Body of Jesus Christ is there destroyed and consumed: Hence we must conclude, that he is both dying and immortal, dead and risen, and worshipped by the Angels, and at the same time eaten by Men, things altogether inconsistent and impossible. But where do they find that we must worship the Bread and the Wine, as being united to the Body of Jesus Christ? that we must kneel at every time that we see them, as before God himself, if he were visibly present? Doth not Jesus Christ command the contrary, when he saith, that the time is come that we must worship God *in spirit and in truth*? How in spirit, if we worship the Bread and the Wine? How in truth, if Jesus Christ be not there really present? as we have good cause to question it, and as it may happen, according to their own saying. For in case the Priest be not a true Priest, in regard of some Canonical impediment; or if his intention be elsewhere in celebrating Mass, what kind of Mass will it be? and what shall the People adore? Some young men come to receive Orders very much unprepared, whom the Lord Bishop saith that he hath no design to receive and admit

admit to the Priesthood: as for example, when they send other persons in their stead; that are more Learned, to be examined for them; when they make use of false and supposed Letters; when they are mentioned in a Decree, or deserve an Excommunication. All these persons, according to the Popish Doctors, are not really Priests; they have not the power to make the Body of Jesus Christ, although they may pronounce the words of the Sacrament. Others have not a right intention, out of negligence or design, these cannot cause Jesus Christ to come down under the *species* of the Bread and the Wine, although they pronounce the words of the Consecration. I have known a Priest, that caused a noble Dame to Receive almost every day, at the end of his Mass, to hide from her Husband the secret correspondency that was between them, and to cover it over with a fair shew of Devotion; and for four or five years he never gave unto her a consecrated Wafer, for fear of committing Sacrilege, by causing her to receive in an evil disposition. And about six months ago, some Priests of a Town where I have dwelt, to satisfy a devout Woman fallen into Frenzy, that did earnestly desire them to admit her to the Communion, resolved amongst themselves to put an unconsecrated Wafer into the Chalice, which should be separate from the rest. In such a case, I desire you the Divines of the Church of *Rome* to tell me, if you believe that Jesus Christ is not present in the Bread and Wine but when the Priest pronounceth his words with an intention to make him come down from Heaven, whether the people that  
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assist there and worship the Wafers, don't commit a grievous Idolatry: Yes, you will say, they commit a material Idolatry: But pray tell, whether the Priest and the penitent Woman, the Whoremaster and the Whore, did not commit a crime in your judgment? was not this as great and as formal an Idolatry as ever was seen? I shall not mention many other stories of the baseness, Sacriledges, and Idolatries of the *Romish* Priests, which they are guilty of in this occasion; for I intend not to make a satirical Libel of this serious Discourse. I shall only say in general terms, that if the Father-Confessors of the Church of *Rome* would but speak truth, and declare what I have heard, there is no reasonable man of any perswasion, but will say that which we cannot utter without blasphemy, that Jesus Christ would be extravagant and mad, if he were in the Mass, as the Papists believe.

Purgatory is another new Article of their Creed, which hath no ground nor appearance in Holy Scripture. The *Papists* mention a certain place out of the *Maccabees*, Book 2. ch. 12. v. 43. but this Book *St. Jerom*, *prefat. in Proverb.* and many more, as *Cajetan*, in *fine Comment. in hist. Esther*, and *Cardinal Hugo*, in *Prolog. Hier. in lib. Regum*, declare to be Apocrypha. Another passage is cited out of *St. Matth.* 12. where Jesus Christ saith, that there are some Sins that shall not be pardoned, neither in this world, nor in the world to come: From hence the *Papists* conclude

conclude by a Maxim of Right, *Exceptio firmat regulam in contrarium*; that there are some Sins that shall be pardoned in another world, that is to say, according to their meaning, in Purgatory. But we may easily perceive that they miserably wrest this passage, and argue very impertinently to make this conclusion; *Some Sins shall neither be pardoned in this world, nor in the world to come*; ergo, *There is a Purgatory*. A Chymist would sooner extract ten ounces of Oyl out of a Pumice-stone, than to gather this conclusion from the premisses: But there is nothing impossible to the Popish Divines; they can make a fire with any wood, when they are to warm their own Kitchen. If I might argue in the same manner, I might say with more reason, that *Judas Macchabæus* never thought to speak of Purgatory in the foregoing passage, but of the Resurrection of the dead: I am perswaded, that from St. Paul's words, *Heb. 1. 3. He hath by himself purged our Sins*; we may conclude a Doctrine contrary to this of the Papists; For seeing Christ hath purged our Sins, what need of any other Purgatory; seeing that he hath done this by himself, that is, by his Blood, as St. Paul saith, *Revelat. 1. 6. there is no need of the Fire of Purgatory*.

But pray tell me which of all the first Doctors of the Christian Church mentions Purgatory? and how was that Festival established in the Church of *Rome* to pray to God for the deceased? I have many times been ashamed, when I have been questioned, because I was forced to alledge a Dream as the cause and ground of one of the chief Articles of that Religion.

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The Abbot of one of the Monasteries of *St. Benedictus*, as the *Roman* Legend declares, heard upon the top of a Mountain from whence certain flames did proceed, not much unlike to those of *Ætna* and *Vesuvius*, a confusion of voices; occasioned by the struggling of the flames with the air round about, as the Philosophers inform us; as many times it happens when the Air is shut up in Rocks and concavities: this brain-sick Abbot fancied that these voices came from the departed Souls burning in those flames, to desire his Prayers. Therefore he appointed in his Convent a Festival-day, to pray to God for the deliverance of these poor Sufferers. The next night it is said that he had a vision of these Souls, which to his seeming were mounting apace towards Heaven at the same time that his Monks were praying in their Church for them. Afterwards he published his Dream and Vision, which was look'd upon as a Divine Revelation; when the Pope came to understand it, he soon established a Festival, like that of the Abbot and Monks in their Convent, to be observed all over Christianity: The design succeeded very happily; the silly women, that believed that their husbands Souls were frying in Purgatory, gave vast sums of Money, and great Revenues, that Prayers might be said for the happiness of the deceased. About this time some Dreamers had Visions in their sleep, the Priests assured them that their departed Friends did require from them Prayers; this Doctrine was proclaimed in the Pulpits, and believed every where as an undoubted Truth; it pass'd for an Article of Faith, for which the Priests were more willing to dye, than  
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for the Faith of one God, or for the belief of the Incarnation of the Son of God. This was the first beginning of that Festival, and of that mode received for currant in the Church of *Rome*, to pray to God for the deceased Souls. From hence we may judg of the thing in it self; and whether it is not to the abuse of mens credulity, to deliver upon these grounds this as an Article of Faith.

But, that we may refute the *Papists* Errours from their own confessions and belief, If we may obtain a *full Indulgence* to be exempt from the flames of Purgatory; if by wearing a *little Scapulary*, a *Medal of five Saints*, or by repeating three times in our sickness *Jesu Maria* before a Crucifix, or by being of the Fraternities of the *little Habit of the Virgin*, or of the *Rosary*, or of the *Dying*: What reason have they to be so earnest with the Widows, that Prayers may be said for their Husbands? &c. when they have seen them perform all these duties which they impose upon the negligent, as weighty Cases of Conscience, especially at the time of Confession, what need of any Mass to be said for their deliverance from Purgatory? They affirm at *Rome*, that one Mass said before a privileged Altar is able to bring up a Soul from the very bottom of Purgatory, although it hath been condemned to remain there one hundred or a thousand years, or till the day of Judgment: Wherefore then do they oblige Children to buy daily Masses for many years in all the Churches of a City, and give away their Revenues for ever, for the repose and happiness of their Parents Souls? If one Mass be sufficient, what need is there of so many thousands?

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wherefore do they condemn them as Atheists that will have but One, because they trust upon the Privilege of such Altars? And if the Pope hath the power to let the Souls go out of Purgatory when he pleaseth, as the *Papists* say, why does he not free them? Is it not for want of Charity, to suffer them there in Torments? to release but one, when he may release a thousand, or all. Is it not pity to see needy wretches labour and sweat all the Week long; poor Widows take the Bread out of their Childrens mouths, before they come to be of age, and give it to a fat Priest on the Sunday, that he might say a Mass, and deliver by that means from Purgatory the Soul of a Wife or of an Husband, when the Pope may perform this with two words, by granting an Indulgence? From hence we may plainly discover that the chief design of this was to enrich the Clergy with the spoils of the Orphelin, and of the poor Widows, and with the Estate of the deceased.

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The Invocation of Saints is another senseless and groundless Doctrine, for there is no Text of Holy Scripture that mentions any thing of it: it is there neither commanded nor allowed of, nay several passages prohibit this Idolatry: *There is one God*, saith St. Paul, and *one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. 2. 5. there he confirms the Faith of *one God*, and of *one Mediator*: If any should offer to maintain to a Popish Doctor that there are many Gods, he would exclaim in a rage upon him,  
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as upon a wicked Idolater : Fair and soft, Mr. Doctor, you have little cause to suffer your wrath to kindle against a person as innocent as your self; you are no less guilty, in regard that you affirm that there be many Mediators, although St. Paul protests that there is but *one*, as there is but *one God*. The King of *Samaria* was punished with death, because he had sent to enquire of the god of *Eckron*, as if there had been no God in *Israel*. The *Papists* deserve as great a punishment, because Christ hath been pleased to invite us unto himself, and oblige us to seek to him alone; *Come unto me all ye that travel and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you: learn of me, for I am meek and lowly*, Matth. 11. 28. No, replies a *Papist*, I will not go to thee, I will not address my self directly to thee, for thou art a rigorous God, thou wilt not suffer Sinners to be so bold to speak to thee, only Saints are allowed to offer up unto thee their Prayers. Doth not this language of a *Papist* contradict Christ's command, and slight his call and gracious design? When the Son of God came into the World, he had no other intention but to banish out of it all Idolatry, and to establish the Worship of the true God. Because, saith an Eloquent Bishop of *Ravenna*, that wonderful Majesty in which God appeared unto *Moses*, and the dreadful threatnings and punishments of his Law did hinder his people to make their addresses to, and trust in him, and did encourage Idolatry, by causing them to seek to other gods, more tractable, and of a more easie access; he hath been pleased to become Man, like unto us, *To win them by the expressions of his kindness, and to hold*

them fast bound to his service, by the testimonies and declarations of his Goodness, Petr. Chrysol. Ser. 147. This was God's design: But by that strange propensity of men to Idolatry, they hinder its accomplishment; for instead of looking up to him, and receiving from him grace and mercy, they have run to others; and sought for other Mediators and Protectors, other visible Gods, whom they implore in their indigency: This alienation from God proceeds from their fancying him who is their Brother, and like unto them, and who is become their Friend, armed with severity and justice; by this means they are frightened away from his service, and cannot with so much confidence as they ought rely upon his Mercy. In this manner God's divine Wisdom is disappointed, and his Design frustrated by the ignorance, baseness, and blindness of men. The Intent of the Son of God, saith Tertullian in his ordinary strain, when he took upon him our nature, was totally to abolish Idolatry; he knew that men were very inclinable to this vice, that few in the world would be content to worship God in spirit and in truth; he had seen them bow down to a golden Calf, to mortal Men, to Statues of stone, Onions, &c. This is an Impudency, saith likewise St. Austin, which was unsufferable to him; he had an intent to bring a remedy to these disorders, by condescending a little to mens inclinations; therefore he took upon him a Body, that men might have a God according to their own mind and desires, and that they might adore a Man without offence: *Ut pro impudentia idololatrie satis Deo fieret per impudentiam fidei.*

*fidei.* How did men answer so great a Mercy? I confess they prayed unto, and worshipped this God-Man very faithfully for several Ages; but at last the Spirit of darkness crept in amongst them, and hath drawn some away to their former Abominations: instead of being governed by that holy Impudency which Faith furnishes them with, and prompts them to, to adore God in a Saviour-Man, and worship a man as God; they have substituted others in whom they confide, to whom they present their Vows, and offer their Sacrifices. This is the *Papists* Crime: Jesus Christ is not properly their God, they worship and pray to the Saints; they forsake the Lord, that calls and invites them to come to him, to go and make their Prayers to, and worship the Servants. Look but into their Chappels and Churches, you shall scarce see ten persons kneeling to the Crucifix, when you may perceive several hundreds before the Altars of the Virgin *Mary*, and of the other Saints: I have often taken notice of this when I was amongst them. I am perswaded, that if the *Papists* had not their Idol of the Mass, I mean the Sacrament, to present to the people to receive their homages, Jesus Christ, whom this Sacrament signifies, would be quite forgotten; they would scarce think upon him, if they did, it would be with much indifferency. You shall see something more of this in the next Article.

The Worshipping of Images is one of those things that was most offensive to me in the Church of *Rome*, since.

Since I took the liberty to read the Holy Scripture, for I never found any one passage that seems to allow this Superstition, but have met with many that represent it as the most grievous of all other crimes. I know that their ingenious Wits have distinguished their Worship into that of *Latria*, which is only due unto God, and into *Dulia* and *Hyperdulia*, which may be paid to the Creature: But how can the ignorant Vulgar make this distinction? And doth not God in expresse words prohibit, in one of the Ten Commandments written with his divine finger in the Tables of stone delivered to *Moses* upon the Mountain, *To make any Image, or likeness of things which are in Heaven or elsewhere; and command us, not to fall down to them, nor serve them?* Do not the *Papists* by their daily practices violate this Sacred Law? To what purpose are their cunning distinctions, and the right direction of their intentions, their elevations of their mind from the Image to the Saint, and from the Saint unto God, seeing they do what God hath expressely forbidden? I desire to convince the most obstinate of all the *Papists* by their own thoughts, and the reflexion of their minds, for this consideration hath been very powerful to undeceive me. When I did consider the continual disputes between *Protestants* and *Papists* about the worshiping of Images, I thought upon *St. Austin's* words, to *Petil.* and the rest of the *Donatists*, and that his direction was the best means to end the controversie, and to understand which of them was in the right, *To. 7. de unit. Eccles. contr. Epist. Petil. c. 3. Non audiatu- tur hac dico, hac dicis, sed hac dicit Dominus, &c.* we must



must not heed what the *Protestants* say, nor what the *Papists* affirm, but only what God declares, according to the exposition of those Doctors that were of neither side: let us take one of them, or if the judgment of one is not sufficient, let us take ten, put into their hands that by which we shall all be judged, the two Tables delivered to *Moses*, the ten Commandments of God, let us intreat them to read over that which concerns the Worshipping of Images; *Thou shalt not make unto thy self any graven Image, or the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth, thou shalt not bow down thy self to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity, &c. Exod. 20.* Let us lead these indifferent men into a Church of the *Papists*, and into another of the *Reformed Religion*, let us desire them to tell us which of these Perswasions is to their seeming most conformable and obedient to this Law: will they not say that it is the *Reformed* and *Protestant*? For amongst the *Papists* they may see several Churches and Chappels, and in each of them eight or ten Saints, or rather Images of Saints, and before every one of these Images they shall find above twenty men and women kneeling with lighted Tapers in their hands, they shall see others carrying their Offerings up to the Saints Altars; and a Priest in his Mass, often perfuming the nose of the Image with Incense, they shall see a Deacon appointed to read the Gospel, reading that appointed for the Saint's day, over the head of such diseased persons as they imagin that the Saint can cure, they shall see many others,

others, as well Priests as other Clerks, singing upon their knees the Litanies of that Saint before the dumb Image, and such like abominations they shall see. What think ye in conscience that these Primitive Doctors would say if they beheld all this foppery? would they not cry out against that which God hath prohibited? You are in the Errour, would they say to the *Papists*, for ye do what God hath forbidden in expresse words: He forbids you to *make Images*, and your Churches are full of them: He forbids you to *make any Likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above*, and nevertheless you make unto your selves the Likeness of those men whom you fancy to be in Heaven: He forbids you to *Bow down to them*, and yet you Kneel to them: He forbids you to *Serve them*, and behold all your Priests are employed in their Service and Worship, one saith Mass, another smoaks the Idol's nostrils with Perfumes, another reads unto him his Gospel, another is busie to light Wax-candles about him, all the rest are singing his Praises. What think ye, *Papists!* will not God, that declares himself to be a jealous God, be offended to see you pay unto such senseless Idols that Honour and Service which he hath expressly forbidden? Will not he punish you according to his threatening, *to the third and fourth Generation?* There is no person of the least reason will have this thought, for the thing of it self is very plain; we need not much Logick to discover this Errour, and to condemn it. Therefore it is not without good cause that the Church of *Rome* forbids the reading of the Holy Scripture, nourishes her people with

a strong and indisputable respect for the Pope and his Oracles, although he commands things contrary to God's Word, they believe nevertheless that they are obliged to obey and credit whatsoever he saith as an Article of their Faith, and to curse as Hereticks all such as follow not their example. The Reasons that they pretend to justify their Superstitions are very frivolous and unlikely: They commonly tell us, *That they worship not the Image, nor the Saint that is thereby represented, but God in that Saint shewed unto us by the Image.* This Reason is very impertinent, seeing that God forbids not only *the worshipping of Images*, in the same manner as we believe the Heathens did; but he forbids us *to make them*, to make any likeness, to carry it abroad, *to serve and fall upon our knees before it*; which the *Papists* do daily. Besides, this Reason hath no likelihood; for we see by our experience every day, that the Saint, or rather the Image of the Saint is worshipped and revered, and not God in the Saint, as the *Papists* would fain persuade us. For if they worship only God in the Saint, wherefore do they esteem more a graven Image than a painted one? We can never see the people going out of their Parishes and Precincts to pay their homages to an Image painted in another place; wherefore is this? If they only seek in the Image the resemblance of the Saint, to call to their minds his virtuous behaviour and actions; wherefore do the *Papists* beyond the Seas trot a-foot an hundred leagues from their own homes, to cringe and bow to a monstrous Image, which in some places hath not the appearance of a man, who should be represented decently,

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about six foot high; for this Image is like a misshapen Dwarf, ugly and ill-favoured; having the Virgin Mary standing by him in the shape of a Child about seven or eight years of age; whereas these persons leave their own Parish Churches, next to their houses, where the Image of the same Saint more decent, more like to the Original, and more beautiful, stands without receiving the like respect. Wherefore do we see in the Church of St. Anna of *Auray*, in *Britany*, fifty or sixty thousand Pilgrims in her Festival-day, whereas it may be not ten shall be found in other Chappels dedicated to the same Saint, at that time? Wherefore is there such a vast number of silver and golden arms, legs, hearts, heads, and little children hanging there, rather than in the other Churches consecrated to the same Saint? where, it may be, we shall find no other Ornaments but those which have been dedicated to, and left her by the devout Snails behind them; I mean, their silver-colour'd slime with which they beautifie her walls, and paint the face of this worthy Saint; it may be we shall find there nothing but a crazy Shrine, broken in many places, and one before the great Altar made up with the tayl of some old Gown, and so tatter'd, that many times it is no easie task to tell of what stuff and colour it was of, &c. Wherefore do the common people throng to this Church only, their hands loaden with Crosses, Beads, Medals, and other baubles, to have them touch the Image of St. Ann, which to my knowledge is but a block of decayed wood, almost rotten, and which was found in a puddle, lying in the mud over head and ears; if they believe not  
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in this wood any divine virtue more than ordinary; and more than in other Images of this Saint? Wherefore have the *Carmelits*, the Keepers of this Church, been so careful to preserve so long every morsel and crum of this rotten wood which they have been forced to cut off to mend the Image? and wherefore have they offered it about the Countrey in little bits to the Noble persons and Gentry, that have desired it to sanctifie their Closets, if they did not believe in this crazy wood some holy quality, some wonderful virtue, like to that which the *Heathens* affirmed to be in their Idols? Let them not therefore tell us that they seek nothing else in the Image of a Saint but the representation and likeness, to call their Virtues to remembrance. For they take all men to be fools and Idiots, whom they would perswade to admit of this excuse, by doing what they do. A *Heathen* might with as much reason tell us that he is a Christian, that he believes, and that he acknowledgeth and and worshippeth but one only God; when I see him upon his knees before his Idols, offering to them his perfumes.

To say the truth, I think that there is but little difference between the ancient *Heathens* and the modern *Papists*; if there be any, it is only in their names; for at present the *Papists* speak in the same Idolatrous language as the *Heathens* did, for without exception nor reservation, they say now in the Popish Dominions that the Images themselves may be worshipped; I am certain that the *Heathens* never shewed more respect to their Gods, than the *Papists* do at present to their Images. This thought came into my mind at every

time that I did look over the Ecclesiastical Histories where they mention the *Pagans* Idolatries. I was confirmed in it by what one of the most famous of the Popish Doctors tells us; *Thomas Aquinas*, named by them the Angelical Doctor, maintains very solidly and rationally, that a man or a child that hath attained to an age able to understand the natural truths, and to make use of his reason, if he can but discourse upon the things that he sees, he must needs discover the necessity of a first Being, of a primitive Principle, the Origin of all other things; of a first Truth, the only source of the rest; of a first Cause, that gives motion and action to all secondary causes; he must needs find the necessity of the Being of a Sovereign Moderator and Governour of the Universe, who commands in chief over all things that are and shall be in the World: It is not possible but that such an one must find out by the light of Nature, that *There is One God, and that there can be but one Only God*. When I had made this supposition, and did nevertheless find that *Aristotle, Plato, Pythagoras, Dioclesian, Trajan*, and other Emperors until the time of *Constantin the Great*, had Canonized many men, and reared up unto them publick Statues, to receive the Worship of the People, and Sacrifices; and that a certain *Valentin* had caused no less than thirty to be made of a new fashion, fifteen males and fifteen females. Is it possible, said I to my self, that men should be so stupid as not to understand that there can be but one only God, one only true, perfect and sovereign Divinity? Had not they as well as we, the light of Reason and Nature to know this? Yes, doubtless they:



they knew it, and according to the judgment of *Thomas Aquinas*, it was impossible but that they must have this discovery; they knew this God, they did worship him, they did rear unto him Altars as well as to the other Gods: As may appear by that Altar at *Athens*, consecrated to the *Unknown God*, which was the occasion of *St. Paul's* Preaching unto them: some of these primitive Heathens did place Jesus Christ in the number of their Gods. How came they therefore to be guilty of Idolatry? wherefore are they accused of this crime? It was because they did worship men and other creatures with the true God. They did fancy some divine qualities in certain creatures, and therefore they revered them, or rather they revered and adored God in them: For we cannot conceive how those great Philosophers, who are yet received amongst us as our Teachers, could worship a Rat as a true God; it is not credible that they were guilty of so great a mistake, to take a Rat or an Onion for the great Creator of Heaven and Earth. Neither did they imagin that their *Cæsars* and their *Hero's*, men whom they had seen entering into the world, living and departing as other men; were real Gods; but they believed that they were the chief Friends and Favourites of the true God. They had seen them perform notable and wonderful deeds while they were on earth, which made them judge that God had yet a particular affection for them, and that he had more regard of them than of other men; therefore they thought themselves obliged in duty to pay unto them more respect; to adore in them the divine qualities which God had given them, and

and to pray unto them; as to persons whom they imagined to have an influence upon God, and to be well esteemed of him. For this cause they built for them Temples, reared up Altars, erected their Images, and put them in frequented places, to be there adored of the people; they appointed Festivals, that they might be then worshipped in a particular manner; in these solemn days the people did throng together to kneel before these dumb Statues, to offer to them their Vows, Prayers; and Sacrifices; all which are homages due to none but to God alone. This was their fault, this was their crime, which causeth them to be condemned of Idolatry. Don't we, said I to my self, don't we do the same as they did? do not we render to our Saints and Images the same devotion as the Heathens did to their false Gods? Let us judge by this comparison between them and us. They made Images, we do the like; they set them in publick places, we likewise; they did fall down and kneel before them, and burn incense unto them, and do not we do the same? they prayed unto them in their need, to *Mars* in time of War, to *Neptune* when they did set sayl to go to Sea, &c. Don't we *Papists*, said I, imitate them? These and such like considerations did often trouble and disturb me against my will; for I could nor well suffer such reflexions that did lay open to me the nakedness and abominations of my Religion, so much like do the Heathenish, condemned by God himself. For the *Papists* in time of War fly to the Saints that are the Protectors of their Kingdoms, as if *St. Denis*, *St. Marcel*, *his*, and the other Protectors of *France* were at their request,

together to dogge in a quarrel for their sakes in the  
 Court of Heaven, against *St. James*, *St. Nicholas*,  
 and the other Protectors of *Spain*, when these two  
 Nations are at variance. The *Papists* pray to *St. Peter*  
 when they are at Law, because he was a very good  
 Lawyer; as if such labours of an employment on  
 Earth were to continue it in Heaven; *St. Joseph*  
 was a Carpenter, *St. Crispin* a Shoemaker, and so  
 of the rest. We call upon *St. Roch* in time of the  
 Plague, *St. Eutropius* for the Dropfie; because the  
 Legend informs us that these Saints have been sick of  
 those Diseases; as if the Saint that hath been troubled  
 with an infirmity on Earth, did enter into Paradise  
 only to become there the Physician of it, to get a  
 Patent, and pass the degree of Doctor. They pray  
 to the Virgin *Mary* at all times and seasons; and  
 give her many ridiculous names; they pray to her  
 for their Eye-sight; styling her *Lady of the Light*;  
 they worship her by the name of *Our Lady of good*  
*News*; when they have any Ships sayling upon the  
 Seas; they call upon her in distress and affliction; and  
 stile her *Our Lady of Gladness*; in a grievous Sicknes  
 they make their addresses to her, and flatter her with  
 this title, *Our Lady of Pity*, or, *Our Merciful Lady*; and  
 in all other necessities they honour her with these  
 glorious Names, *Our Helpful Lady*, *Our Assisting*  
*Lady*, *Our Lady adorned with all kind of Virtues*. Thus  
 to this one Saint they ascribe many names, titles and  
 properties, that they might make the silly people  
 believe that she is in some respect not much unlike  
 unto God; whose attributes and perfections are in-  
 finite. But that which I held to be very ridiculous  
 amongst:

amongst them, is the manner of representing and worshipping Jesus Christ: they have made him a monstrous Statue, about ten or twelve foot high, which they baptize by the name of St. *Saviour*; now this Saint, distinguishable from their other petty Saints by his great stature and large bulk, is worshipped by them for the preservation of Corn, and of the Vines from the cold and frost, for the curing of their Cows of a disease called the *Swelling*, and for the healing of the Horses of the distemper named the *Stagers*; this Saint is prayed to for to keep their Sheep from the *Rot*, their Bees from dying, and their Lambs from the fury of the Wolves, &c. Therefore on his Festival-day at *Nantes* and at *Tours*, and other places where these great Images are erected, you might see an infinit number of Pilgrims of all ages, conditions and estates, bringing their gifts to these Statues; one brings thred, another wool, this man corn, another butter, and some, sucking pigs or pieces of bacon, others bring grapes or pots of honey, or other commodities, but all bring wax-tapers to burn all the while that Mass is saying at his Altar, all come with money or some other thing; so that about the Altar of this good Saint at such a Solemnity you may find coffers full of wheat, barrells filled up with butter, tables loaden with great pieces of meat, and such a prodigious number of little wax candles, that one time when I had the charge to gather up the remains, which the people did cast yet lighted at the foot of the Statue, although each end of the candle was so short that I could not hold it in my hand any longer, I gathered up in five hours full three-score and ten

ten pounds of wax. It may be that some ingenious *Papists* will turn all this to the advantage of their Church, as they do the other abuses and abominations committed in it : They will say, that this is an expresseion of the wonderful Faith of their people, therefore they are apt to blame a Religion where they cannot spy so much Zeal amongst the Professors, and accuse it, as if she had neither Faith nor Devotion: But we may very well suffer them to speak in their own defence, for this is a most palpable Idolatry; the Heathens were never guilty of so much; I do not think that it is possible to do more to Jesus Christ if he did return into the world. But I may say they are to be excused, if they entertain their people in these Idolatries for a thousand Crowns, which they receive in one day by the credit of one of these Images, may satisfie for a mortal Sin, and free them from the penalty that it deserves.

There is but one thing more required to make them perfectly like to the Heathenish Idolaters, which is to have an universal Idol, proper to represent several Saints, which might serve in many Festivals. The Emperor *Trajan* had an Idol of this nature; he had a golden head of an Idol kept secretly in his Closet, which he caused to be put upon the body of the Statues that he had a mind to worship; in this manner he did take off the head of his Gods as he thought fitting. I have seen amongst the *Papists* something like to this, in a little Town of *Britany*, in the Bishoprick of *Vannes*; if it were not for the respect that I bear to some persons concerned, I would name all the circumstances, which I shall be forced to do, and

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many other things that I now conceal, I shall declare to the World, if any offers to accuse me of lying and falshood: in that place I have seen a mutable Saint carried up and down, wearing several apparels, according to the peoples devotion; it was the Image of *St. Maurice*, who was prayed unto in his day, that he might heal the sucking Babes of a disease called by the Countrey-people *Carrel*, a benumbing disease, or the Rickets. On *St. Giles's* day they carried the Image to another place, and of a Bishop that it was before they made it an Abbot, cloathing it accordingly, and seeking unto it for another distemper called the Disease of *St. Giles*. On *St. Ives's* day they chang'd his Abbot's attire into that of a Lawyer, they put a corner-cap upon the Image's head, and a bag full of Writings in its hand instead of a Croche; in this manner it continued to be *St. Ives* until another Festival-day; and the people did pray unto it not only to get the better of their Suits in Law, but also that *St. Ives* might kill and destroy such as were thought to be the authors and inventors of calumnies cast upon them. For the *Papists* there, when they are injured by any slanderous discourse, or by another, they summon the supposed offender to appear before *St. Ives* within a year; for they confidently believe that he that hath done the wrong shall surely dye before the limited time: Let any man judge, if it be likely that a Saint should destroy a man for a trifle. We may from hence perceive what grievous abuses, errors, superstitions and mistakes reign in the Church of *Rome*. There is therefore no difference between this Church and the Heathens. I relate not here the follies.



follies and abominations that have been heretofore practised, but these that are now visible; I intend not to recollect the passages of the time past, but only to make mention of the present; I speak not by hearsay, but that which I have often seen to my unspeakable grief and confusion; because I was in reason forced to condemn a Religion which I was engaged to support and maintain, and to preach up a Worship which I knew in my soul to be pure Idolatry.

I did often wish, that the *Papists* would but confine themselves to the limits of Reason in their Zeal and Devotion for these perty Saints; and would have shewn more to *St. Peter*, *St. Paul*, or to the other Apostles, but they are not so much esteemed, because they are not in such reputation for their Miracles; I did often observe their Churches forlorn, their Images without ornaments, all covered with dust, and the Spiders hanging by their lips and noses; I did not see so many sacks full of wax, so many arms, legs, dugs of silver and of gold, crutches, hoods, shirts, and garments of little Children hung up in their Chappels, as are round about the Churches of these Saints so much in vogue for their pretended Miracles: The Festivals of those great Saints unto whom we are next unto Christ most obliged for our Religion, are celebrated with little or no solemnity; there are no more Chappels built for their sakes, and such as are erected are decaying every day; they are put out of their places, and grow out of credit, and other new Saints put in, as I took notice; their Images are cast behind the Church doors amongst the sweepings, and lie along with the besoms, because they cannot

get their expences, their Chappels and Altars cost more to keep them, than they bring profit; whereas if it be but generally credited that the rotten Image of a little Saint hath been pull'd out of the dirt and mire, that such a one grants every man his request, that he obtains for them their suits in Law, that he procures a safe arrival to Ships and Merchants goods at Sea, that he gives rain or fair weather as people require, that he heals diseases, the Tooth-ach, the infirmities of the Eyes, &c. all the world will throng to him, all will run with their hands full of Gifts, and laden with stately Offerings. From whence proceeds this? It is because that people have forsaken God, to adhere to the creature, and their minds are possessed with a devilish superstition, which aims so much at their present advantage, that they will have no devotion but for themselves, they will seek nothing but their own contentment in the worship of their God, nor adore him but for their profits.

What I have heard from the mouth of a Suffragan of a Bishop of *Britany*, whose name I shall conceal for the respect I have for him, will further confirm unto you this Truth: He assured me, that when he was in the Visitation with his Bishop, he passed by a Parish situate at the entrance of a Forest, where the Countrey people did worship a Saint named *St. Gonttran*, or *Gautran*, that he might protect their Sheep from the Wolves; the Bishop's curiosity more than his devotion led him into the Parish-Church, to see the Saint, whom he found holding a Wolf tyed to his garment, but so much decayed, that there was scarce any thing to be seen of the Saint, only the bold  
Wolf

Wolf did there appear : the Bishop being a good and understanding man , and such a one as labours to remove and banish away , as much as he can , all Superstitions of this kind , commanded the Image to be taken down , with the Wolf , and to be burnt together ; because the Saint being decayed by degrees , and vanishing out of sight , the Country-people began to reverence , and pay their devotions to the Wolf : If the rest of the *Roman* Bishops were but like to this Prelat , the Popish Religion would soon become Reformed. Now it happened by chance that the very day that this Protector of the flocks was consumed in the fire , the Wolves of the Forest came out and carried away three Sheep out of the Village ; the people immediately believed that the Saint had sent them this misfortune , because he had been burned in the flames ; therefore they flocked about the Suffragan , whom they believed to be the occasion of the Saint's burning , they loaded him with imprecations and curses , and threatned him in such a manner , that if he had not withdrawn himself out of their sight , they had stoned him. All this makes me believe , that these *Papists* seek not so much God's honour , and the glory of their Saints , as their own worldly gains and benefit , as the Heathens did when they worshipped their Idols : For I am fully perswaded , that if the Saint that is revered in the Church of *Rome* were a Devil , they would nevertheless pay him respect and devotion , if he had but the reputation of working Miracles and granting Petitions , so abominable they are in their Superstitions.

There is another grievous abuse crept in, occasioned by the Relicks of the Saints, because the Primitive Christians did entomb with honour, and secure the bodies of the deceased Martyrs, and gather up the ashes and bones of their consumed bodies, that the Heathens might not express their cruelty upon them after death, nor make a sport of them after death, therefore by degrees this superstition is crept in: men pay them now as much respect as to Christ's body, if it were upon earth. This Idolatry was in *St. Austin's* days, as he himself declares, *de opere Monach. c. 2. The Devil hath clothed a great many of his hypocrites with a Monkish attire, they wander up and down the Provinces without being sent; they are never settled, never fixed, never resting; some of them, saith he, make sale of Martyrs members, or such as are supposed to be so, &c.* This Traffick is nothing in comparison of that which is now-a-days, for such things are sold at an excessive rate, as dear as the Devil intended to buy Christ, *with the power of Kingdoms and their glory, upon condition to fall down to them, and worship them;* the whole World is full of this deceitful commodity, which may be said to be the most subject to cozenage. We have good cause to wonder, to hear no less than eight or ten Churches boasting to have the Virgin *Mary's* Girdle, Christ's Winding-sheet and Seamless-coat; there have been many suits in Law in the Courts of Parliament between several Churches, about the keeping of one Relick, for every one did affirm theirs

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to be the trueſt. If all the bits of wood which are now eſteem'd to be pieces of our Saviour's Croſs, were gather'd in a heap, one hundred men would not be ſufficient to carry them; and if all the nails which are ſaid to be the true nails of his Croſs were together, there would be enough to nail a Coach: we may ſay the ſame of all the other Inſtruments of his Paſſion; I would mention them all, but they are already reckon'd up by others; and there is no man that hath peep'd out of his Cradle, and ſeen never ſo little of the World, but knows what I ſay to be true. Go to *Turin*, there you ſhall find ſome ready to ſwear that Chriſt's Winding-sheet is there kept entire; go to *Beſançon*, you ſhall find the ſame thing. But that which hath ſurprized me moſt, was that which I have ſeen in a Convent of devout Virgins unto whom I was a long time Confeſſor. I had no deſign to name them; but becauſe ſome have accus'd me of falſhood in this Article, I find my ſelf forc'd againſt my will to particularize more than I intended: it was in the Nunnery of Religious *Carmelites* call'd of *Nazareth*, in the City of *Vennes*, in the Province of *Britany*. At a certain time I went in amongſt theſe devout Nuns, to receive the Confeſſion of one of them upon her death-bed, when I came away, three or four of them according to their cuſtom brought me back from the place where their ſick are kept, to the gate; one of them invited me to viſit their ancient Chapter, which was an old decay'd Chappel in a corner of their Convent: I went with them, and at the entrance I wonder'd to ſee them kneel in a place where I perceiv'd no Image, I deſir'd them to tell me

me the cause; they informed me that it was because of some Relicks that were there; I went to them, and found in the Wall, in a place very clean, a great number of Bones, with an Inscription that declared that they were the Relicks of eleven thousand Virgins. I asked of them the reason why they had not put them into a vessel fit for Relicks, according to the custom, and why they did not make them more publick? They replied, that the Bishop had caused them to be visited before he would suffer them, by three Chirurgeons and the Physician of the Convent, and that all of them had found and agreed together, that the most part of these Relicks were the Bones of Horses; nevertheless they were resolved not to burn them, as they had been advised, because their ancient Records did assuredly tell them that they were the Bones of these martyred Virgins; they did further say that it was possible in the massacre of these Virgins, that there might be an Horse killed amongst them, this did not make the rest less true and real Relicks. I answered them, It may be that the Bones of some of those cruel Butchers were killed by the Soldiers that guarded them, were there also; it is not therefore well done, said I, to kneel to them: one of them answered, You preach to us every day that we are saved by Faith. This is the usual answer which they return every time that such like mistakes are objected to them: As if Faith, that looks upon God as its only object, or upon the divine enjoyments, had need of the Bones of a dead Horse to assist its contemplation, as if it did require from us a veneration for the Relicks of a dead Beast, or of an Idolater.



Idolater. Let any man, that questions the truth of what I say, inquire, or cause to be inquired, from the Nuns of that Convent, I am certain that they will confirm this relation. From that time I took away all the Relicks that I had carefully kept, and gave them to friends, putting in their room another, which was worth a great deal more than the former, of which I was then more certain.

For in regard that men go in pilgrimage two or three hundred leagues, to look upon our Saviours winding sheet, the Virgin *Mary's* peruque, *St. John Baptist's* head, and other Relicks, I did conceive that I could find one nearer that was worth all these: It was the piece of linnen which is called the *Corporal*, upon which we put the chalice and the consecrated bread in the Mass: I took a piece of it, upon which I had oft-times placed the consecrated wafer, for it was old and decayed. This hath been done by many besides my self. If my Doctrine and Religion be true, said I, this is as good as Christ's winding sheet, as His seamless coat, the pillar, and the holy Cross, the crown of thorns, the handkerchief of *St. Veronica*, and the other Relicks, which receive so many pilgrimages from far. All their sanctity is derived from the Body of Jesus Christ, which they have had the honour to touch. Besides we are not certain if they be true, for there are so many Churches that quarrel about them, that we have cause to doubt, but I am certain said I, according to my belief, that this linnen hath touch'd the Body of Jesus Christ. This linnen therefore I laid up safe in my box of Relicks, where I kept it along while after. I am perswaded I had good reason to do so, in regard of the nature of the thing,

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and assurance that I had. I think that every good *Roman Catholick* ought to do the same, if he hath any belief in his Religion and Doctrine, for if their excessive faith, which they have for Relicks, is pleasing to God, and sufficient to cause Miracles to be done by them, although these relicks be false, as they themselves confess to happen sometimes, what is the reason that their Religion doth not cause them to repose their trust in that which they believe to have certainly touch'd the Body of Jesus Christ: and wherefore doth not this linnen produce Miracles? Nevertheless we see that scarce any body respects it, 'tis cast aside with other linnen without respect; a little bit of *St. Francis's* slipper is more reverenced than all such linnen and chalices of the *Papists*. Wherefore do we not see their Zealots gather up the parings of their Priests nails, that touch their God every day? It is certainly because they have no faith where they should have, or if they have, it is but an erroneous faith, that is not able to work a Miracle: It hath not that efficacy as their belief, or their mistaking of a ship nail for one of our Saviour's Cross, and the bones of an horse for that of the Saints, as the *Papists* would persuade me. They may reply, that the linnen, the chalices, and the Priests nails, have touch'd only the elements: But answer, are not these elements strictly united to the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ? This is the reason they pretend for their adoring them: Their Divines declare this union so strict and extraordinary, that they make no difficulty to compare it to the Hypostatical Union, for as they say both are divine and wonderful, for as the humanity subsists in the incarnation, without a natural and a proper subsistence, like-

likewise the bread and the wine remain in this Sacrament, without their own and natural Subsistency, which they suppose to be destroyed, to give way to a Transubstantiation. These things being so, wherefore may not the elements sanctifie a thing, seeing that they are really united to Jesus Christ, God-Man: and why do the *Papists* so little regard that those things that are known to have touch'd them, when they reverence others that are said, without any likelihood of truth, to have approached near to Christ's humanity? This is unjust, and a reproach to their Faith, not only in regard of Relicks, but also in regard of their Sacrament of the Altar.

Let us proceed next to another Article of the Popish Faith. That whosoever depends not upon the Pope, whosoever don't acknowledge him for their Lord, and the Head of the Church, whosoever he be that lives out of his obedience, shall be infallibly damned: of which Article I could never be fully perswaded; therefore I was always very favourable in enjoining penances to them that did willingly in their Confessions discover that they doubted of the truth of this part of the Popish Creed. For such as behold the manner of the *Protestants* living, and their Christian behaviour, cannot well be perswaded of it, I have known some Ladies miserably tormented with despair, because they could not be perswaded of the damnation of such persons. My ghostly Father, have they said to me, I am damned, and without hopes of salvation, for I cannot possibly believe one of the

Articles of our Creed: I cannot be perswaded that such a Lady, a *Hugonot*, can be damned; in regard she is so pious and virtuous in her conversation; every morning I know that she is about an hour at her devotions in her closet, afterwards she takes a religious book and reads, or applies her self to work, she is never idle, all her discourse is of God's holy Word, and her self appears so sensible of what she speaks, that she foreeth tears from the eyes of the assistants; it is not possible to be more just, charitable, and fearing God than she is; it is not possible to be more zealous in God's service, and more careful to oblige her domesticks to live well, according to the Laws of God; I cannot believe that such a person can be damned: nor I neither, said I to my self, I am of your mind, nevertheless it was then my interest to dissemble the inward perswasion of my mind; Don't let that trouble you, I was about to say to such, if you have not committed a more grievous sin than that, I shall not load you with an heavy penance. I am certain that many are of my mind in the Church of *Rome*: It is a cheat and a design, to force people to believe it as confidently as the most holy mysteries, and a great error, to tell them that they cannot have any hopes of salvation, if they are not perswaded that the others are assuredly damned; although God commands us to the contrary by his Apostle *not to judge others*, *Rom. 14. 3.* *Jam. 4. 12.* and assures us in his Gospel; that there needs nothing else to attain unto salvation, *but the keeping of his Commandments*; which the *Protestants* profess to do, and perform. Therefore I did often argue in this manner: It is not possible to be damned without sin, for sin is that alone that shuts heaven,

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and draws upon us the wrath of God : Now there is no sin but is against his commandments ; either we must omit what he enjoyns , or commit what he forbids . Every one therefore that believes what God hath revealed unto us by his Prophets and Apostles , and by Christ , and shall keep the commandments of God , shall infallibly be saved : the Scripture declares it ; *He that believeth in me , although he were dead yet shall he live ,* saith our Saviour , *Joh. 11. 25. and whosoever liveth and believeth in me , shall never dye.* He don't tell us *we must believe in the Pope* , to be saved , but *we must believe in him* . He repeats these words in several passages of the Gospel , *Verily verily I say unto you , if any man keep my word he shall never see death :* he speaks the same to that man which enquired of him what he was to do to be saved , *If thou wilt enter into life , keep the commandments* , *Matth. 29. 16.* when he enquired which  $\dagger$  Christ answered , *Thou shalt not kill , thou shalt not commit adultery , thou shalt not steal , &c.* Now the Protestants profess and observe these two things ; to believe in God , and to obey his commandments . This is their Faith , and the principles of their Religion , to believe all that God hath revealed , and to do all that he hath commanded . Wherefore should they be damned ? Because they don't believe in the Pope , answers a *Papist* , and because they don't keep the commandments of the Church of *Rome* . But , my friend , from whence hast thou that these two things are also necessary for thy salvation : is it from God , or from man : can you find in any passage of the Holy Scripture , or in the three Creeds of your Religion any thing of this doctrine ? It is true , you shall find , *I believe in God* the

the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, &c. You shall not find there that you must believe in the Pope, that the Bishop of Rome is the Head of all the Christian Church, that he is infallible, and that he must be obeyed as God himself: You shall not find there any mention made of the Sacrifice of the Mass, of Purgatory, Indulgences, the Worshipping of Images, nor of the other Articles of the Popish Religion. And the two other Creeds, made about two or three hundred years after the first, to explain and paraphrase it, speak of no such things: Listen attentively at your Morning Prayers, or when Mass is sung in your Churches publicly, you shall hear nothing of the Pope, nor of his Church, you shall only hear of the Articles which Protestants believe with less additions than you, for they credit them only because God hath revealed them, they will have no mixture of humane authority with the divine. Look over all the commandments of God's Law, you shall not find there any thing of praying to Saints, of worshipping of Images, of abstinence from meats, of fasting in Lent, of confession of sins to men, but there you shall find that we must worship God, that we must not make any graven Image, &c. All these commandments are kept more religiously by the Protestants than by the Papists: what reason therefore can we find for their Damnation: how come they to be so bold as to thrust this into their Creed as an Article of Faith, ambition and antichristian rage against them hath perswaded them to it. But I wonder how they can offer to maintain this doctrine, with this addition, that there is no salvation but by an



an union with the Pope, whom they affirm to be the Head of the Church, and by consequence, to influence and give life to every one of its Members; Suppose the Pope is a wicked man, as many such have been; according to their own confession; If he be covetous, profane, lecherous, an Heretick, a Negro-mancer, or a hellish Monster, how can any relation and union with such a one do me any good? can he make me partaker of that holiness which he himself wants? I have good cause to fear that he will infect me with his vices. Is it not a grievous mistake, and a ridiculous fancy, to say, that I cannot please God, unless I communicate with, and be related to his enemy; and that I must not expect salvation, but by a communion with him that is assuredly damned? Nevertheless this is one of the Articles of the Popish Creed and Faith.

Their Doctrine concerning Traditions is also contrary to the Holy Word of God. It tends to withdraw us from our faith and belief in it. If Jesus Christ did now live in the world, he might with reason treat the *Papists* in the same manner as he did the *Pharisees*: *In vain do they honour me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; for laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups, and many other such like things; you do transgress the commandment of God by your tradition: Mark 7. 7. & 19. Matth. 15. 3.* The most part of the *Papists* Principles and Articles of Faith are nothing but Doctrines and Commandments of men, which have altogether changed the appearance of Christ's

Christ's Church in all those Kingdoms where they have been admitted. I might make this appear more plainly, if I did but run over all the grievous impertinencies, that are by this means received as so many Articles of Faith in the Church of *Rome*; if I did but make an enumeration, of all the false Miracles published for true; but I should exceed the narrow limits prescribed to my self. I shall therefore confine my self to one thing, that hath very much scandalised me in this Doctrine, it is the reason and expedient that they have to maintain it, which tends to the total subversion of Christian Religion, and to the destruction of Christ's Church. For to perswade people the more that their Traditions are necessary; they exalt them above the Authority of the Holy Scriptures, and advance such doctrines, and propose such questions, as might make any man an Atheist that will hearken to them. How do you know, say they, that these Writings that bear *Moses's* name have been written by him? How do you know that *St. Matthew*, *St. Mark*, *St. Luke*, and *St. John*, are Authors of the Gospel? that *St. Paul*, *St. James*, and *St. Peter*, have written the Epistles? unless it be by Tradition? Have you seen the first Originals of these Writings, that you credit so much? And if you did see them, who is it can affirm, that they were written by these great Apostles, that have been dead so long? unless you believe the men of our days, who have received what they affirm, either by writing, or otherwise, from the *hear-say* of their Forefathers. This we name *Tradition*. *Pighius* argues in this manner, *Hierarch. Eccles. l. 1. c. 2.* This was also my reason and argument, that I have often made  
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use of, but when I had seriously examined its strength, its veracity and design, I found it to be but weak, and tending to undermine the foundations of our Faith, of our Laws and Religion, for if I might have the liberty to propose such questions, I might as well make others, which shall intangle them in as great a difficulty as theirs do us: How know you, may I say, that your Tradition is good and true? How do you know, that such as affirm St. Peter to have been Bishop of *Rome*, speak truth? How came you to be perswaded that there is a Bishop of *Rome*? have you seen him? How are you certain, that the Pardons and Indulgences that you receive came from him? that he hath confirmed them with his signature? could not the persons that have delivered them to you counterfeit his hand? May not an Atheist make use very well of this argument, and ask, How do you know that there is any other God besides the Sun? have you ever seen him? have you ever spoken with him? How do you know that there are three Persons in the Godhead? How do you know that Jesus Christ hath lived upon earth? that there have been Apostles? &c. This is the drift and end of these questions, which we must reject as the Devils cunning to ensnare our Faith. *Hearken not to those that will speak in this manner*, saith St. *Austin*, Confess. l. 6. c. 5. *How knowest thou that these Books proceed, and are derived unto men from the Spirit of a true God? for this we must believe above all things.* And Tertull. *contra Hermogen.* I acknowledge the fulness of the Scripture, *Hermogenes* cannot find there any pretence for his errors, therefore he and his fellows fly to the assistance of Tradition. And elsewhere he saith, *Take away from He-*

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reticks that which is common to them with the Heathens, and confine them to the Holy Scriptures, and they can no longer subsist. *De Resur. carnis.* I think this answer is a sufficient reply to the Papists. Many others have been given, which are to be read in the Books of Controversie. It is my judgment, that God hath fully as much power as men, and that his voice is as efficacious and perfect as ours. We are to be distinguished by our voices and speeches, as when a Son hears his Fathers voice, he needs not that a Servant should inform him that his Father speaks; likewise our Saviour Christ assures us, that *his sheep hear his voice and know it.* We need no other but Christ's voice to know that it is His, that He speaks unto us in the Holy Scriptures. Let not the Papists propose any such questions for the future, and let them take notice of what St. Jerome tells us upon *Hagg.* *That the things that are invented are false, as for example, such as are said to be the Apostles traditions, which have no authority nor testimony from the Holy Scriptures, are mark'd by God's sword.*

From this Doctrine of Tradition proceeds their Faith of Miracles, a Faith as ill grounded and ridiculous as the Traditions themselves, that are but old wives tales. We may judge of such as are related to us of former ages by them that are published and performed in our days, of a thousand there is scarce one that hath the least appearance of reality, if we will but seriously consider and examin them. Nevertheless they are as boldly delivered for truths in the  
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Popish Pulpits, as the Gospel. I have declared many, being forced thereunto by my Office, that I knew to be very false. Several persons of the common people have related to me accidents, that have happened in places of devotion, which they look'd upon as notable Miracles; but when I have examined them well, I have understood that they were but natural effects. If they had addressed themselves to some other persons, their belief and declarations had passed as current as Christ's Resurrection from the dead, and Lazarus rising out of the Sepulchre; they had been recorded, and laid up for posterity to read. For example: A Country fellow comes to me, with two or three of his neighbours, assuring me, that his wife had been at the last gasp, and that because he had offered her to St. *Mathurin*, or St. *Anne*, the very next day she recovered of her distemper. But he did not tell me, that the Physitian, that had judged her sickness so desperate, was but a Country Chyrurgeon, who hath scarce seen the outside of Physick Books, and therefore knew not how to judge of a disease by the symptoms. I have healed many in this manner, by prescribing to them no other receipt but patience. I did not discover to them, that the dangerous distemper, which had taken from the Patient speech, proceeded from a *Crisis*, or the turning of the blood, or from the working of some violent physick. Another comes to me, and tells me, that his child hath been thought to be dead for several hours, but when in time he comes to take notice, that it was a Convulsion-fit, or the Falling-sickness, he don't go back to acquaint the Priest, that what he thought to be death is but a disease. Who is it that would not have

really believed to be true, what the Bishop of *Angers* published in print, he is a person not easily to be persuaded; he caused an exact enquiry to be made, and was certainly informed that Jesus Christ had visibly appeared in the Parish-Church of *Ulm*, in the Priests hands as he was saying Mass: Yet he hath been forced to acknowledge, to the shame of the whole Church, that it was but a fiction of the Priest and a few Parishioners, who thought to enrich themselves by that means: If this Priest had but dyed a few days after, he had been Canonized for a Saint, but he hath lived, and declared by his Life what manner of man he is: the Bishop hath been forced for his scandalous behaviour to degrade him, and cast him into a Prison, where I think he remains yet. We may judge by this what to think of all the other Miracles noised abroad in the Church of *Rome*.

The last Article relates to the Indulgences. I don't here question whether the Pope hath power to pardon sins when he pleaseth; Jesus Christ can do no more, the Pharises would never allow him that power. I desire therefore that the Divines of the Church of *Rome* would resolve me these Questions which I have often proposed to my self: Wherefore do the Popes proclaim their Universal Jubilees, which causes so many thousand people to trot to *Rome*, or to some other great City where the place is appointed, to gain them? For if they answer, that it is to obtain the forgiveness of our sins: I may reply, that



that there is no need to go so far to obtain this forgiveness; there is no Parish but a full Indulgence may be bought every year several times: There is scarce a noted Town, but it may be purchased every day, only one being concerned and initiated into the Fraternity of the little habit of the Virgin, many times obtains for us above one hundred and fifty every year: I shall not speak of the other means to get these priviledges and advantages. Now those Indulgences, as the Popish Divines affirm, free us as well from the punishment, as from the guilt of all manner of sins; if therefore this is to be had in every Parish-Church, what need is there of a Pilgrimage to *Rome*? if all our sins are pardoned, what will the Pope's or his Agents Absolution profit us? Is not this to make a sport of mens credulity, and to deal with them as with blind men and fools? It may be they will answer, that at such solemn occasions the Pope absolves from grievous sins, reserved to himself, which are not forgiven every day; but if I have not been guilty of such horrid crimes, wherefore am I solicited and press'd upon to go and purchase a Jubilee? wherefore am I obliged otherwise to make a general confession of my sins? and if I don't, wherefore am I look'd upon as an Atheist? From hence we might conclude that their Church is never perfect but in the time of the Jubilee, because at that time only it hath a power to forgive all manner of sinners: But Bishops and Priests are to be found in every corner, that have power granted to absolve these grievous and horrid sins; there is scarce a petty Monk but will say he hath that priviledge, four or five sins excepted, which scarce happen in an hundred

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dred years in a Province: If none but such as are guilty of these sins did go to *Rome*, the Roads of *Italy* would not be so populous as they are at this time.

I might here mention the other Indulgences that may be obtained every day. The abuses are so great and ridiculous, that if you please to view the instruments of a Popish Zealot, you shall see stuff and trinkets enough to set up a Shop: You shall see Beads of all sizes, shapes and numbers, fifteen in a string, fifty in another, thirty in another, ten in another; all this is full of mystery: you shall see little garments, like childrens babies attire, some white, others red, others brown; you shall spy Medals of all sorts, Cords with knots of several magnitudes, and Crosses of all fashions: The *Papists* are become so ridiculous to cause their Zealots to wear two pins a-cross upon their sleeve or breast, assuring them that they shall obtain the forgiveness of several days sins, as often as they kiss this Cross, or pronounce over it two or three hard conjuring words. I was never more astonished and scandalized than I was the last year, when I was sent about the time of the Festival of the holy Sacrament to preach in the City where I made my abode, I found every body stored with these Indulgences, wearing pins a-cross, they inform'd me that the devout and right Reverend \* Father of the *Jesuits*, called Father *Huby*, had recommended this notable piece of devotion to them: By this means he disposed of above ten millions of pins; which he had the conscience not to sell, he gave them out of an excess of charity; but in requital

*These Rapacious and Covetous of their bloody Society play a thousand such tricks in these Kingdoms and Cities that are as their devotion, as in Spain, Italy and France.*

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he disposed of above ten millions of pins; which he had the conscience not to sell, he gave them out of an excess of charity; but in requital

requir'd his charity did require for every two pines a sum of money, to help his Brethren, the *Jesuits* travelling in *China* and in far Countries to say Mass; for in those places they cannot meet with such fools that will encourage them, by contributing to their subsistence.

If we did but run over all the other Tenents of the *Romish* Faith, we should find as many errors, mistakes and abominations as we have done in these. But it is not my design to mention all, I intended to be more succinct, and I look not upon my self as able to make this description so well as others who have more studied the Disputes and Controversies.

### THE THIRD PART.

THE Third Reason that hath so long kept me in the *Romish* Religion was ground'd upon the practices and Laws of that Church, the solemn Festivals, the Auricular Confession, Abstinence from Meats, the Forty days of Lent, the Priests Vows of Chastity, and the austere Lives of the Monks. All these things did present themselves as it were in a body together in my mind, and caused me to entertain so high an esteem for Popery, where I saw so many holy and religious customs observed, that I could not look upon the rest but with disdain, hatred and aversion, because I could not find the same things.

But when against my will I was forced to open my eyes, and being engaged by my Office to seek into the beginning of all the abominations that I saw acted in the world, I found that these things pro-  
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ceeded from the Laws invented to deceive the most subtil wits, and intice the devoutest souls into the broad road of hell, by the Devil, who sometimes appears as an Angel of Light.

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What a vast number of disorders have been occasioned by the many Festivals of the Church of *Rome*? There were so prodigious a multitude lately observed in *France*, that the King was forced about seven years ago to get a Dispensation for the ease and benefit of his People from the Pope, who abolished a great many. But this Dispensation hath caused a strange deformity in all the Bishopricks of *France*: Some were willing to obey the Popes order, by casting out of the Calendar such Festivals as were abolished; other Bishops would not admit it; some cut off a few, keeping still the rest, others were offended, that the King did inroach upon their priviledges, therefore instead of diminishing the number of their Festivals, they established new Feast-days; some fast in the Saints Eve, and keep not the day; others regard neither the fast nor the day; others cause them to be kept only 'till noon; others to prevent all inconveniencies have appointed all Feast-days to be observed on the *Sunday*, and their Fasts on the *Saturday*: So that yet we may see two men of the same Village, or of the same Family, of a different perswasion; one obliged to keep a Festival-day for fear of a mortal sin, and the other not; nay the same person is ingaged to this observation if he stays at home, but if he steps over a gutter or rivulet to go into another Parish he commits

commits no such sin, and may do what he pleaseth: Can any man think that these practices proceed from God? Yet this they believe, and the Casuists amongst the *Papists* affirm.

Auricular Confession is another Invention of man's brain. The *Romish* Clergy have imposed it out of policy, as a necessary means to keep men in their duty, and to hinder them from mischievous attempts. The design was good, but the means employed is unjust and tyrannical: I may safely name it so without fear, for I know sufficiently what I am to think and say upon this subject. I have read over and over the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers concerning this matter, and because I did not trust to my own judgment, I intreated the assistance of some Learned Men of my acquaintance, to see whether they could find any thing out of St. *Ambrose*, St. *Austin*, or other Fathers, to assist and confirm my Meditations, that I was to deliver in Sermons, which I composed upon this Subject; but I could never see nor find any passage there, that confirms this politick Institution, as it is practised in the Church of *Rome*. We may find that we must confess our sins unto God, but not to men; we may also find, that it is well done to declare and discover the troubles of our consciences to them that have the rule over us, and are appointed by God to instruct us, that we may understand and receive from them seasonable comforts and instructions. This is very useful to us, and sometimes absolutely necessary. But it is not required

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that we should reveal all our weaknesses, mention all our sins small and great, to particularise their number and quality, and all their circumstances and aggravations, to a sinful man, as vicious as my self, who ought to confess also it may be to me, as the Priests of the same Church confess their sins to one another; it is not required that I should make this confession, as it is practised with so many ridiculous questions, that teach us to commit sins that we knew not before: The Casuists are of opinion, that when a Priest should be inclinable to the most abominable sins of lechery, and in danger to be tempted to them by every apprehension, yet when he receives the Confession of a Virgin, he had better omit nothing than to cause her to pass over any thing, and to commit by this act a material sin in their opinion: This can never be proved, unless the *Papists* offer to do it by a new Bible, by other Evangelists, and other Interpreters, than have yet written upon the Holy Scriptures.

I could never digest the doctrine of the Popish Divines, that teacheth us two kind of sorrows required in true repentance; the one they name Contrition, which is, say they, when we are grieved to have offended God for his sake, because he is so infinitely good, and because sin displeaseth him: this grief is sufficient to obtain from God the forgiveness of our sins, in case we cannot conveniently go to confess them; for if a Priest be present we cannot be dispensed from this duty. The other grief or sorrow, named Attrition, is when a man is grieved to have offended God out of worldly interest and selfishness, because sin deprives us of the hopes of Heaven,  
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and condemns us to Hell, &c. This sorrow, say they, is not sufficient of it self to obtain the absolution of our sins, but only when it is accompanied by the Priest's absolution. That is to say, that although a man upon his death-bed shall confess all his sins, if the Priest will be so hard-hearted to deny him absolution, in case he departs in that estate with such a sorrow in his heart, he shall be damned for all that. Let any of the Popish Divines tell me which of the holy Evangelists have taught them this distinction? which of the Apostles did ever preach such doctrine as this? Nevertheless I think they have reason to recommend it, because the salvation or the damnation of souls is so highly concerned, according to their teaching, and many times of ten thousand souls in one Church: This bastard Sacrament is not of the number of the Sacraments of which we are never to be partakers but once; for it is commanded every year at *Easter*, and some persons are partakers of it almost every day, as is usually practised in the Church of *Rome*. What is the reason that neither Christ, nor his Apostles have ever mentioned it? Or rather how came these persons to be so bold as to impose these distinctions as Articles of Faith? Is it possible that the Priest's presence or absence, or the opportunity of Confession, makes our repentance true or false, according to such trivial circumstances? If I am at a distance from a *Romish* Priest, am I therefore to be look'd upon as if I were at as great a distance from God, and in a worse estate than another from whose sides the Priest is not to be drawn? Doth this cause my sorrow to be less or more able to prevail upon God's mercy?

Doth true repentance depend upon the Priest's good pleasure? And Attrition, which is but an imperfect sorrow, of no validity of it self in God's sight, is it more considerable, more perfect, and more able to save me, when a Priest shall have mark'd me with the sign of the Cross upon my forehead? when he shall have whispered two or three words in my ear? What am I the better for all this? Is God's Justice thereby satisfied? and his Mercy more inclinable to pardon me?

According to this ridiculous Doctrine, suppose I should weep and lament for my sins as bitterly as *St. Peter*, with as many expressions of holy love as *Mary Magdalen*, if I do not confess them to a Priest, I shall be nevertheless damned for them. And suppose I should be guilty of the most horrid crimes, if I can but imitate this imperfect sorrow, a superficial displeasure to have offended God, for the love that I bear to my self, if I reveal them to a Priest, I shall be saved notwithstanding. Wretched *Judas*! hadst thou had but a *Romish* Priest at the foot of thy Gibbet, thy Soul might have gone streight to heaven, for he performed all the conditions required by the Popish Doctors in a true Penitent; for they say that three particulars are to be observed, the compunction or pricking of the heart, the confession, and satisfaction; compunction in the soul, confession of the mouth, and satisfaction of the hand. *Judas* was a zealous observer of these particulars, as may appear by his History in the Gospel, *Matth. 27. 4*. He wanted not compunction, or a hearty displeasure to have sinned against God, for it is said *he repented*: He confessed also his crime, *I have sinned*, said he, *in betraying the*  
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*innocent blood.* David, in his repentance, could say no more; and the greatest Casuists amongst the *Papists* demand no more; for he did not confess only in general, but he mentions also the greatness and nature of his sin. There was also in his repentance a satisfaction, for he restored back his ill gotten money, *he brought back the thirty pieces of silver.* How comes it to pass therefore, that penitent *Judas* was damned? It was, saith a *Papist*, because there was no Priest at the foot of the Gibbet, where he hang'd himself, to give him absolution; if there had been one never so comfortable, to speak to him but these two words, *Te absolvo*, he might have made him a Saint, and following Ages would have built Temples in honour of him, Altars and Images, as to the other Apostles, to receive the devotions of the People. Some may reply, that *Judas* had not that sincere and hearty sorrow required in a true Penitent, and that this was the cause of his damnation. I am of the same opinion, I acknowledge that to be true; but I affirm, and can prove, that *Judas* had as much sorrow and displeasure as the *Papists* require in a sinner, when they give absolution, and assure him of his happiness. I know that some of them will say, that this attrition must be supernatural, grounded upon a divine faith, as the fear of forfeiting the joys of heaven, of falling into the pains and torments of hell, or a grief proceeding from these and such like persuasions; it is not derived from God, or His Love, but from our interest revealed unto us by faith. In *Judas*, we may take notice of a displeasure as great, and not much unlike to that which proceeds from these principles, as may appear by his own words, *I have sinned*

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in betraying the innocent blood: He declares publicly the innocency of our Saviour, which was an act of faith; moreover he declares, that the consideration of Christ's innocency was the chief cause of his displeasure. There is no ghostly Father of the Church of Rome but will take *Judas's* repentance, not only for an attrition, but also for a true contrition. I am certain that they give absolution to many persons, who never had so great a sorrow for their sins as *Judas*. Therefore why was *Judas* damned? St. *Ambrose* returns us a satisfactory answer, by which we may understand, how dangerous it is sometimes to confess our sins rather to men than to God: *Arbitror*, saith he, *enim quod etiam Judas potuisset tanta Dei miseratione non excludi à venia, si penitentiam, non apud Judæos, sed apud Christum egisset.* Ambr. l. 2. de pœnit. c. 5. I am persuaded, saith he, that *Judas* might have been admitted by God's infinite mercy, if instead of professing his repentance to the Jews, he had addressed himself to Christ. He went to confess his sin to the Jews, who instead of reproving him for it, and exhorting him to trust in God's unpeackable goodness, returned him an answer, that tended to confirm him in his malice, and cast him into despair, *Quid ad nos? tu videris*; said they to him, *what is that to us? see thou to that.* This is the true model of the *Papists* repentance: They confess their sins to a Priest, as much loaden with guilt as they are themselves. I have been drunk, saith a drunken Sot in his confession to a ghostly Father, who is sometimes more debauch'd: *Quid ad nos?* replies the Father, *tu videris*: It is no great crime, we are apt to be drawn away with the love of good company, therefore for penance I enjoyn thee to cause

a Mass to be said for thee before the Virgin *Mary's* Altar; after that he is perfectly absolved. I have been guilty, saith another, twenty times of the sin of Fornication; *Quid ad nos?* replies a lecherous Father-Confessor, *tu videris*. It is a difficult task to suppress the motions of love; therefore thou shalt for thy penance number over thy Beads, that is sufficient for thee: such a one is afterwards certain to obtain salvation, by this absolution so easily obtained. I have worshipped Images, will a nice conscience it may be say, contrary to God's command; I have believed many things not agreeable to what is recorded in the Holy Word of God; I have prefer'd man's inventions to the Laws of God, &c. *Quid ad nos? tu videris*. Thou must do so, saith a Priest, by this means thou shalt come to be a Saint. This is a *Judas's* repentance, and a dealing like to that of the *Jews*: Let any man judge if it be able to secure the salvation of our souls.

I might add to this, that extraordinary Power which the *Romish* Priests claim of pardoning all manner of sins, and of blotting them out with the breath of two words. Is not this to make themselves equal to Jesus Christ, and to declare themselves to be the Saviours of Man-kind? Wherefore do they treat their Penitents as slaves, and deal with them as if they were their Gods?

Moreover, they treat the Son of God most unworthily, and are guilty of the same sin as the wicked *Macedonians*, who affirmed that the Holy Spirit was but the servant of the Father of Eternity. The *Romish* Divines deal with Christ in a more disgraceful manner: For by their doctrine they make him

him become their Priest's servant : For when they are pleased to say, we absolve this sinner, it is the same as if they said to Jesus Christ, we command thee to give to this soul sanctifying grace, that it may be justified and acceptable to God the Father. We will not grant absolution to that sinner, that is to say, we forbid thee to shew him or her so much favour as thou didst to penitent *Mary Magdalen*, to wash away her sins; this belongs to us; we will do it a fortnight hence; we command the sinner to come to us at that time; until then we will bind him or her with a tie not to be loosed: The Lamb of the *Revelations*, without our assistance, cannot open the book of a sinners conscience, to take away from it the impressions of sin. This is the imperious language of the Popish Priests to their Penitents; they deal with them in this manner; their Missionary and Itinerary Preachers are yet more cruel to such as are at their mercy: I would not have any man think that I add more than is true, I will assure him that I speak nothing but what I know to be too true. If the Father-Confessors speak not these words always, they have them in their thoughts, seeing that they deal thus with the people, and maintain that they must do so: So impertinent and ridiculous they are.

But consider in what manner this Confession is made. They begin by a repetition of the *Confateor*, saying, *I confess my self to God the Father Almighty, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to St. Michael the Archangel, &c.* What an impertinency is this! Doth my absolution depend upon the will of God the Father, of the Virgin *Mary*, of St. *Michael*, and of the Priest



Priests equally; must they all consent to the forgiveness of my sins? Is not God's mercy sufficient alone? why do they rank them with God? Afterwards the Priest forceth them to mention all their sins, every particular, and circumstance, asking them questions according to the condition of the persons, but such many times as are more proper to teach than to reprove vice, daily experience declares. But what manner of sins think ye that the Penitents are forced to confess? Such as many times are but the whimsies of the ghostly Fathers, who would persuade their Zealots of being more spiritual and more subtil than ordinary by this means, to oblige them to a greater reverence of their persons. What ridiculous impertinencies have some of these Father-Confessors taught their penitent Nuns, in their Confessions? You shall see what the right reverend Father, Father Yves a Capuchin of Paris, hath written in his Letters of Agathon to Erasmus, and Father Chiron a Carmelite, in his Book called *The Examen of the Mystical Theology*. They bring a devout Nun before her Father-Confessor, accusing her self in this ridiculous manner and nonsensical language: *Benedicite, ghostly Father, I accuse my self; and confess that I have not been early enough upon my knees, in the morn, and about the concerns of my internal housewifery; in the time of my prayer I have not been fixed to the In-action, nor to the contemplation of the In-being, I have not acted my devotions in a fit temperies of soul and body; I have suffered my senses to wander from the domination of the Man-spirit: thus hath it been almost all the time of the economical work of my obediential duty; I have eaten and drunk, and taken of the creature too freely, otherwise than in sight of*

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*natural mercy, without minding in due time to do all of it, stop to my All, by a recoll of my self within my self, of my outward part within the compass of my inward, in the bottom of my soul; I have not done my best endeavours to keep my self always in the fiery Meridian of the full reigning of God in me; I have not rested myself under the caliginous mists of the enlightning Pedagogue: I have not been thankful enough to the triple Spirit of God in me, to the sear-heart, the endure-God, and the transpiercing lover-God.*

These two Authors affirm that the Missionary Priests, of *Peter Camus* Lord Bishop of Bellay, and *Father Domatian* have taught their devout Nuns to confess their sins, in this extravagant manner. Let any man judge if such lessons as these are not ridiculous and impertinent; if their consciences are not deceived, by believing all these niceties, to be crimes; they had better declare with *David*, *I have sinned*, I acknowledge my offence, O God have mercy upon me, than to run over so many fiddle-fadles. The time of Confession is spent in reckoning up such impertinencies as these, and after all, the Priest enjoyns a penance more ridiculous than the confession it self. A certain Monk informed me of a very discreet and virtuous Lady, who was so conscientious, that she came to him to intreat him to mitigate or change a penance commanded to her by a Missionary Priest, which was to dip her smock in cold water, before she went to bed, and to sleep in it every night for a whole year; she had been once obedient to him, but her obedience almost cost her her life. Nevertheless she was persuaded that there was no salvation for her if she did not perform her penance, this cast her into a despair, and made her almost mad. See unto what grievous follies.

follies and mistakes this supposed power drives the *Papists*. They pull Jesus Christ from his throne, to place their Priests in his seat, they callave the souls and consciences of men to their wills, so that they believe themselves bound to credit whatsoever they say, to do whatsoever they command, yea the greatest follies and impossibilities.

Abstinence and Fasting I have always look'd upon as a very holy and useful practice, but I could never understand, under this dispensation of God's Grace, in this liberty and freedom from all laws that are not of his enacting, how it is possible, that a good piece of beef, or a slice of fat bacon should be able to damn my soul, sooner than a red herring. For we are commanded by St. Paul, to eat that which is set before us; and our Saviour assures us, that it is not that which enters into the mouth that defiles the soul, but that which comes out. They tell us that *Moses*, *Elijah*, and our Saviour Christ have done so before us, their virtuous examples in this respect were admirable, but not imitable; the *Papists* are not careful to follow them exactly, no more than the *Protestants*. For they should spend forty days and forty nights without eating or drinking. I am perswaded that if the Pope should make any such law, the *Remish* Bishops and Cardinals would never believe that he was inspired of God. But we may see by experience, that abstinence from meats and fastings are quite out of fashion, and seldom observed by the *Roman* Catholicks; their Casuists allow liberty to so many, that but few

in these days think themselves to be obliged to keep these Laws; for if you please to set aside all Women with child, all wet Nurses, all Handy-crafts-men, Plowmen, Mariners, and Seamen, Servants that work all day, all Travellers, weak and sick, such as have no means to eat a good meal, that is to say, such as have no fish, or something like that for their dinner, set aside the Magistrates, and others, that labour with their brains, the Ladies, that cannot sleep without a good supper in their bellies, and generally all such as have not attained to the Age of one and twenty, or that are above threescore, and tell me, how many will remain? And of those whom we have not mentioned, but very few observe fasting, for it is no fasting to feed twice a day. I am certain, they are rather guilty of gluttony, to fill their paunch above measure at noon, that they might not long for meat the rest of the day. I think they had better never have made any such Law, which concerns so few, and which by them is very ill observed. But the Prince of Darkness hath found out this expedient, to beget doubts and scruples in the souls of men, that they might sin against their mistaken consciences, and by that means run into damnation.

I must take notice here of another consideration, unto which I could never find any satisfactory answer, and which hath help'd me to discover the vanity of all these feigned authorities, whereof the observance is no small hinderance to a true Christian mortification, a subduing of our passions and worldly lusts. If our perfection in Christianity, and the holiness of our Souls, depends so much upon fasting,

sting, abstinence, and such mortifications of the body, the *Pharisees* were good *Christians*, and the *Turks* would deserve a greater esteem of holiness than we, for the *Pharisees* did perform all these things exactly, and the Laws of the *Turks* forbid them to drink wine, and to forbear eating of several meats all their life time, besides they have certain Monks very austere in their living, the *Dervises* whip themselves publicly in the streets, they cut their skin with sharp rasors, and suffer many such cruelties in their bodies, as *Calcondile* and *Michael Bandier* relate. The wilfull penances of our Monks are not to be compared to theirs. We may therefore conclude, and speak confidently, that this Law is as great an hypocrisie and abuse, as the other Inventions of the *Papists*. To make our Christian perfection consist in such niceties and follies, is to catch at the shadow instead of the body, to mistake the colour for the substance, the appearance for the reality, the shell for the pearl, and the night for the day: But such as are inveigled by the perusal of the Popish Books, which are only allowed to be read in that Church, and such as are besotted and deceived by the repeated lessons of their Preachers, who seldom cry up any thing else in their Pulpits, cannot well make all these Reflections and considerations.

The unlawfulness of the Priest's Marriage is a Law contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and the cause of many abominations, and of the damnation of many Souls, which might otherwise be sanctified and saved.

ved. What I shall say concerning this matter, may be applied to the Monks and Nuns. Jesus Christ himself hath approved of Nuptial Solemnities and Marriage by his presence. He doth in no case disallow it. *Marriage*, saith the Apostle, *is honourable amongst all men*, Heb. 13. 4. Virginity it is true causeth us to be very like the Holy Angels, nevertheless the same Apostle assures us, that *it is better to marry than to burn*, 1 Cor. 7. The Examples of the Apostles, and of their Successors, should be sufficient in my judgment to answer all the objections that may be invented; for although our virtue be never so extraordinary, and God's Grace in us be never so powerful, it is a grievous presumption to affirm, that we have more virtue and grace than the Apostles had, more than those illuminated Souls, full of the most wonderful perfections. It is to no purpose, that they extoll what the Holy Scripture and the Primitive Fathers have said in praise of Virginity. Children that know not what it is to engage in a vow, to observe that which depends more upon God than upon our ability, may approve of their reasons, but we cannot allow them. If we did all but understand, as I have done by the confessions of many persons, how many horrid and enormous crimes this Vow hath occasioned in the Church of *Rome*: It fills it with abominations and filthiness, and causeth such as should be examples of holiness to be patterns of all manner of vices.

Virginity, I confess, is praise-worthy, I have not changed my Opinion in relation to that: I remember very well what I have read upon this subject in St. *Ambrose*, St. *Austin*, and in other Fathers, who have



have employed their eloquent pens to set forth the praises of these noble virtues, if we may so stile things that are in themselves indifferent. The same Sermons that I have preached in *France* in praise of a single life, I dare preach in *England*, without fear of reproof. But I could never yet find in all the Holy Scripture, nor in the writings of the Fathers of the Church, any thing that should oblige us to engage in this rash Vow, or that it is a virtue which we may promise to our selves to observe and keep faithfully till death: I cannot find that God ever promised to bestow the graces necessary for the observation of this vow, to all that shall undertake it. After a long experience and acquaintance with the consciences of men, I have understood sufficiently that this vow of perpetual Virginity engages some in the commission of grievous abominations, who might otherwise be Saints.

Therefore I am forced to condemn this Law, as one of the most wicked inventions of the Devil in Christianity, and one of the most dangerous of all his snares: I dare not say all that I know of this matter, if I did, I should force every modest Reader of these few lines to blush, for I might declare not only sinful thoughts, or desires, and wicked deeds caused by this vow, so highly esteem'd as a virtue, these are but natural brats of that devilish father; but I might mention unto you the most fearful monsters, actions, crimes, and unheard of abominations proceeding from it, such as deserve the fire of God's vengeance from heaven, which once fell upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, such as deserve that the earth should swallow us up alive; but God will not punish the innocent.

innocent with the guilty. How many crimes have been acted! bloody murders and secret cruelties perpetrated! If *Tertullian* were now alive, he might with as good reason exclaim against the promoters of this law, as once he did against *Marcion*, who attempted to hinder the begetting of children. He compared that wicked man to *Herod*, and saith, that in his opinion he was more criminal than *Herod*, for that Tyrant cut the throats of children already born, but *Marcion* was guilty of a greater cruelty, because he did endeavour to hinder the generation of infants. The Promoters of a Single life amongst the Priests are guilty of the same heinous offence; they are guilty of *Herod's* cruelty, *Marcion's* barbarity, the *Gnostick's* murders: All this they cover with the shadow of a pretended virtue; they destroy many souls by engaging them in an estate where it is almost impossible that they should obtain salvation; and cause them to commit many anticipated murders and cruelties. Whosoever hath been where I have, seen what I have beheld, and heard what I have heard, shall say the same as I do now. I have many times pitied those poor souls that have revealed unto me their secrets in relation to what I speak: How miserable, said I, is this poor man! if it were not for this one thing he would live like a Saint, all his confession is stuffed with nothing else but with the sins against his vow; that excepted, I find his desires are zealous, he is devout in prayer, religious in his behaviour, exemplary in his life and conversation: and because he cannot make use of that remedy which God hath allowed to the rest of men, as a prevention of sin, he is in inevitable danger of damnation, if God don't

don't hinder him by his wonderful mercy. If these lines happen to come into the hands of a Priest of the *Romish* Church, I am perswaded, that in his conscience he cannot blame me for what I now write, nor will he think that this is a satyrical Libel, or that these are unjust or ill-grounded accusations; for who soever hath been a Father Confessor amongst the *Papists*, knows an hundred times more than I dare reveal. He knows, that the greatest vice of Priests is the breach of their Vow, and that this is such an ordinary sin amongst them, that a Priest is look'd upon as a notable Saint, if he be never guilty of other sins but of drunkenness, and if he can command his unruly self so much for a week only, so as not to let a lecherous thought escape towards a woman. At least if they would allow a time sufficient to try our own strength, and to experience the effects of God's Grace within us. But far from this, they determin their Children to the Cloister, while they are yet in the Cradle: The eldest Son, as is most usual, being designed for Marriage; the second must be a Knight of *Malta*; the third appointed for a Church-man, into whose hands they often thrust the Breviary before he can yet pronounce the Title of the Book, and complement him with the reverent stile of Abbot, while he is as yet unacquainted with his Alphabet, and what reluctancy soever he shall hereafter have against it, yet must he necessarily still continue an Ecclesiastick. But if the elder Brother chance to fail, the Vocation then ceases, and the Spirit (that bloweth where it listeth) seems to have with-drawn its influence, he throws of his purple robe, and the Gentleman, who was but since

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Yesterday changed from a Clergy-man, is now as ready for the Nuptial as he was before for the Religious Vow, and all this (say they) proceeds from God, which those may believe that think fit, but I for my part never could. As for the Daughters, if there happen to be three, they do usually enter two of them into the Covent, and here it is observable, that God is wont to call the most deformed, whilst the other is born for the enjoyments of the world. The Peasants indeed do cause their eldest Sons to apply themselves to their studies, but after they have performed their Exercises, and spent a considerable sum in their Education, it is no longer at their choice, whether they will become Priests or not, but are compell'd to it, for fear of incurring the displeasure of their Parents. Thus it is, that they betake themselves to the practice of this Law, and from hence proceed so many disorders, which might easily be prevented, if the Church were left to its primitive liberty.

But that which makes these Constitutions of the Church of *Rome* to seem unto me the more strange and extravagant, is this, that they commonly prefer them to the Commandments of God. Let a young man have given himself over never so much to the sin of the flesh, yet when he comes to take Holy Orders, this shall create no necessity of taking out a Dispensation, but if he shall chance to have married two wives, or but one, if she hath been married before to another man, (which they call *Bigamy*) this woman being dead, he cannot take Orders without a Dispensation from the Pope, for which he must pay sauce. Although a man should never so often have taken the

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Name of God in vain, and uttered a thousand blasphemies, yet even for such offences will any Priest very readily give his absolution, and he shall be freed from his guilt and penalty by putting himself to the charge of two or three Masses: But if he should at any time in *Lent* happen to eat a morsel of flesh, there is no absolution to be obtained for such a crime, but from the hands of the Bishop, who will inflict so severe a penance, that he shall have cause to remember it all the rest of his life. Let a woman be never so notoriously guilty of fornication, and prostitute her self as often as *Lais* or *Messalina*, there is no Confessor so inconsiderable but can give her an absolution: But if by extraordinary misfortune she shall on a Friday have tasted but one spoonful of soups which was left the day before, she must necessarily apply herself to the Bishop, and shall (if it be possible) be sent to the Pope himself. By these means it comes to pass that such disorders have crept into the *Romish* Church, and that at present they prefer humane laws to the Commandments of Almighty God.

Before I conclude, it is necessary to answer an Objection, that the *Romanists* are wont to make to any person that shall upbraid them with the abuses and disorders whereof we have before treated. Whence proceeds it then (say they) that there are so few persons that forsake the *Romish* Religion: and that in lieu of those few that go over to the *Protestant* party, we see great numbers return to the bosom of the Church, and make, as they call it, their Recantation.

whereas of all those that have abandoned the *Protestant* Religion, we see scarce any that return unto it after they have once forsaken it? To this I might answer several ways, and I could give many particular reasons, why several *Protestants* in *France* of great worth and quality have shifted their Religion, which is there no longer in fashion, and accommodated themselves to that of the Church of *Rome*. I shall only say this in general, which may be observed in the case of every particular person; that it is Interest, which first invites, and then detains them; this is that which first causeth them to change, and then obstinately to adhere to what they have embraced.

They act many things against the dictates of their conscience to avoid a private persecution, which is often more severe than that which is more open and avowed. The Charges which they offer, the Preferments which they bestow upon persons of Quality, on condition that they shall change their Religion, and a Pension of a thousand Crowns promised to a Minister, provided that he quits his Party, are very powerful motives and arguments for the *Romish* Church; and I have often admired at such as could resist so great Temptations. A Lady of quality, whilst as a Messenger sent from God I solicited and exhorted her to acts of Charity and compassion, caused me once to make an offer of 8000 Franks to a Maid-servant of the Reformed Religion, (and at such a time as she had received some ill usage from her Mistress) to try if I could by that means make her become a Proselyte. I attempted it with all the Rhetorick and Philosophy that I could make use of for such a purpose, but she still remained constant, and slighted



slighted us both for the vanity of our attempt. This is no common virtue, and I believe there are few servants of the *Romish* Religion in this City, but might be prevail'd with by so considerable a reward. But it is not by such means as these that we ought to endeavour the conversion of our Brethren; but by the principles of conscience, and the more rational motives to salvation.

On the other side, those that are acquainted with the Reasons that retain the *Romanists* in the Religion which they profess, will not wonder that there are so few of them made Profelytes: They know well enough that the Nobility and the Commonalty, the Learned and the Unlearned, the Zealots and the Libertines have an hundred invisible chains by which they are held fast. Never expect that a rich Abbot of 5000 Livres *per ann.* should quit such a preferment to become a Minister, or that a man in favour at Court should incur the displeasure of his Prince, by renouncing the Pope. Nor can you with any more reason hope for the conversion of the Learned: for you must look upon them in their Schools as Disciples to no other but *Aristotle*; for they learn to dispute before they are taught to believe, and become Philosophers before they are Christians: If at any time they read the Holy Scripture, it is not with any intent to satisfy themselves which doctrine is most agreeable to that divine Rule; but that they may find therein some Text or other to be wrested in favour of themselves and their perverse opinions. I read the Scripture my self for a long time with this very design: when I met with any thing in it different from my principles, I thought my self obliged to encounter it, and applied

applied my self forthwith to the finding of Arguments which might serve as an answer to it: And this is that which renders the conversion of the Learned so difficult: nor is that of the Ignorant any less; for these are the people that will have no other Faith but that which they deposite with their Curate, and yet so great an abhorrence for all such as follow not their superstitions; that come not to Mass, carry not their Rosaries about them, make no use of the Office of the Virgin, nor pray to other Saints, that they are always ready to attempt their extirpation, and believe that they should therein do God good service. I have heretofore my self had such unchristian intentions and desires as these wherewith the *Papists* are imbued, and amongst the rest those of the Order of the *Jesuits*. I became once so tractable a Scholar by the charitable instructions of these Masters, that I was one of the first that rais'd the Tumult at *Rennes*, and set fire to a *Protestant* Church; at such time as it was believed that they were immur'd within it: and these reverend Fathers were so far from discountenancing the outrage, that they declared their sorrow and regret that we had not at least burnt the Minister there alive. Judge therefore if there be any hopes of their Conversion; who from their Cradle have imbibed such sentiments as these. But the Zealots are yet further removed from it, being blinded, and kept close to their Principles by erroneous Maxims and superstitious Principles, in which they are made to believe the truth and purity of the Christian Religion to consist. They persuade them, that they must at a venture believe what the Church believes; that is, what their Director tells them, that they ought not to raile

raise the least dispute about what is preach'd to them out of the Scripture, as being incapable to comprehend those Mysteries; that to doubt in the least of the truth of Miracles, Traditions, Indulgences, the Power of the Pope and his Priests, or to entertain the least thought of the possibility of being saved in any other Religion, is a most enormous crime. So that that very light, which by the special favour of God is afforded them for their conversion, is look'd upon by them as a machination of the Devil, against which they are obliged to engage. This renders it in a manner impossible that they should ever be reclaimed. As for the Libertines, they have no thoughts of the welfare of their future state, and therefore all Religions are to them indifferent, carrying always about them some pernicious principles, wherewith they are provided, to combat against whatsoever shall oppose their sensual inclinations, and wherewith they extinguish the light of the Spirit, which is afforded them for their relief. Amongst these I may rank the giddy and inconstant, that out of a principle of Libertinism, abandon the *Romish* Religion, and a while after, upon the like motives, return to their former estate; a mercenary sort of people, that are ready to enroll themselves in the service of any that will hire them at a dearer rate. Such men as these, having inconsiderately shut themselves up in a Cloister, where they are obliged to lead a regular life, grow quickly weary of their first design, the Cowl is burdensom to them, and the Religious Yoke becomes insupportable; hereupon they fancy, that if they sally out, and go over to the *Protestant* Party, they shall be received after the same man-

manner that they are wont to entertain the revoking Ministers in *France*, who are usually complemented like Princes. With such imaginations as these, and without any other motive, or being able to render any solid reason of their actions, one of them presents himself to a Consistory; which they presume to be with a good intention, and being unwilling to be so injurious as to send him back, they receive him, in hope that he is sincere in his profession, and will prove a good man, nor is the assistance of some charitable persons wanting: But the man, finding himself free from all subjection, begins to give the reins to his inordinate appetite, frequents Brothel-houses, and gives himself over to a scandalous and sensual life; hereupon they summon him to the Consistory, that he may have the punishment inflicted on him which he deserves, the charity lately extended to him is withheld, and the *Papists* again, by their solicitations, and promises of a Dispensation from *Rome* for the future, and an Act of Oblivion for what is past, they assure him of all possible encouragement, and thereby prevail with him to return to his former state, without any conviction wrought upon his conscience, or any other true motives of his change, than the inconstancy of his mind, and his propensity to his lusts and pleasures. We need not marvel then, that such as these should forsake the communion of the true Church, since we seem hereby the rather to be confirmed, that that Church is the true Church from which they revolt; according to their own argument, which infers the holiness and good discipline of a Religious Order from the number of such as do renounce it. *They went out from us, saith St. John, Ep. 1. c. 2. 19. but they were not of us,*

us, for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us, but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us. By their works we may judge of the sincerity of their conscience, and the truth of their faith, as the goodness of the tree is judged by its fruit.

There are several other things, which from my own experience I could speak to, in laying open the Abuses of the *Romish* Church, which I have not at present thought necessary to mention. But I am perswaded, that what I have said already may be sufficient to convince you, that I have not without good reason forsaken the *Papists*, that I might embrace the Religion of the Church of *England*. I will conclude therefore, with my request to you, that you would reflect on what I have done and said: I have not I hope in this act of mine, discovered any thing of blind ignorance, or any unruly passion, which I trust I may say without vanity, for by the grace of God I am free from it. I know very well, that I am rather exposed to the pity than to the envy of the world, but this I have done that I might give glory to God, and assert that which I am perswaded is the truth.

All that I have said concerning the Abuses of the *Romish* Church, are things whereof I am very well assured, and such as I have not without a great deal of study and industry discovered: I have for six or seven years diligently search'd for Reasons, whereby I might defend them, sometimes applying my self to the Holy Scripture, sometimes to the ancient Fathers and modern

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dern Authors: I sometimes seriously propos'd my Objections to a great number of most accomplish'd men, with whom I had been long conversant, and never could receive any satisfactory return. Wherefore after all these Essays, being perfectly convinced of the truth of your Religion, I am constrain'd to renounce the Religion of my Ancestors, and to take up a resolution to forsake it. But how? and at what time? I must to the glory of God acknowledge it, that it was at such a time as there was not the least probability that I should attempt it, for certain reasons which some are not unacquainted with, and which are not fit to be published.

It will be sufficient to declare in general, that I have forsaken Popery in a time in which I had the strongest and natural engagements to keep me in my predecessors Religion, and in my former Profession. How so? Because a change must needs cause me to run many hazards, bring upon me the hatred of my Friends, and the displeasure of my Kindred, make me appear to them as a declared Rebel, and an Apostate: So that according to the Laws of the Land that I have forsaken, I am to be punished in an exemplary manner, for embracing the truth. These and the following Considerations did long retard my design; as that by this alteration I should purchase to my self nothing but misery, and in the judgment of some, the esteem of a vagabond, or of a licentious person, guilty of some offence or scandal; and that I must never expect to be entertained and live in the world, but as little better than a Beggar.

Notwithstanding all these obstacles and Panick fears, my Christian Brethren, you see that I have freely  
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and confidently engaged my self in the profession of your Religion: I forsake without regret or apprehensions that of my Forefathers to embrace the *Protestant*. This act ought to be look'd upon, as an encouragement of such as are doubting and wavering in their minds, whether that which they profess is the best and the surest, without doubt it is. You may believe me upon my word, which I have confirmed by my deeds, for God be praised in this matter I am not ignorant, I have been long enough deliberating and weighing the Reasons of both Parties, of *Protestants* and *Papists*; I know from whence I come, what I forsake, and what I embrace. Besides, you may well look upon and esteem me to be no mad man, that runs wilfully into his own damnation. There is none more careful in the Church of *Rome*, than I am, to avoid the causes of damnation: If I did but doubt of my salvation in the Reformed Religion, or if I could believe that it were possible for me to be saved in the Church of *Rome*, I here swear and protest unto you, before God, that I would never do what you see I have done, I would rather undergo the most bitter torments, and whatever might happen to me, I would never wrong my conscience. This consideration therefore, and my example, should settle and confirm every one of you in the Protestant Religion, should appease the troubles and doubtings of your mind, fix your resolutions in the profession of the Truth. And you, my beloved Brethren, that are sufficiently grounded in your Religion, and whose lives are conformable, my example should oblige you to rejoyce, in that God is pleased to grant your private and publick requests, and the prayers of your Congregation, by sending to you,

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from time to time, Proselytes, and bringing into your Flock the straying Sheep, or rather the lost Sheep, such whereof the salvation was so difficult, that there was scarce any appearance of likelihood that it should be brought to pass. St. *Agnes* was named the *son* of *Monica's* tears, because his religious Mother shed so many, that at last she obtained her request, and her Son's conversion, from God's goodness. I may this day stile my self in the same manner, for I look upon my self as the return of your religious and charitable prayers, and the Son of your sighs and tears. I would therefore now express unto you my hearty thanks, but you desire that I should render them only to God. I have nothing else to request from you, but the continuation of the same prayers for all those whom I yet leave behind me, especially for such as I have confirmed in their errors and mistakes, I help, and joyne with me in my duty, in endeavouring their conversion. But especially I must entreat your prayers to God, that I may for the time to come lead a life answerable to that holy profession, which I have this day made, that I may not be unworthy of your Communion here, and may attain with you hereafter to the fruition of that Crown of Glory, which God hath promised to his faithful Servants. To One God, and Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Glory, and Praise, now and for evermore. Amen.

**FINIS**

